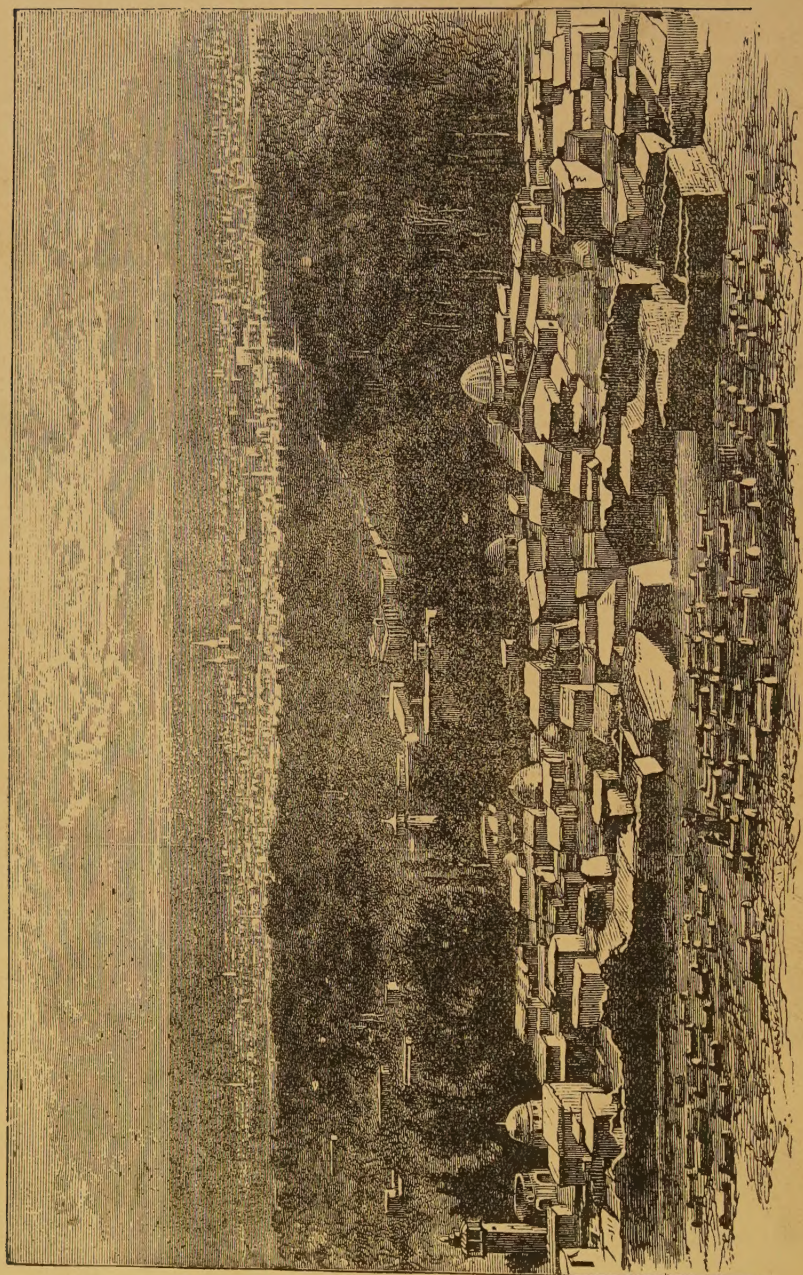




Damascus.

THE
LESSON COMMENTARY
ON THE
INTERNATIONAL SUNDAY-SCHOOL LESSONS
FOR 1883.

BY
REV. JOHN H. VINCENT, D.D.,
AND
REV. J. L. HURLBUT, M.A.

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PHILLIPS & HUNT.
CINCINNATI:
WALDEN & STOWE.

PREFATORY.

THE BOOK never grows old. One always finds "something else" in it. In certain lights even the most familiar truths flash out new meanings. There is always something further on and deeper down that we had not before discovered—so rich, resourceful, and exhaustless is the book of God.

The BOOK grows new to us as years are added to our lives. Every year changes the "point of view." We look from a different angle. We are higher up, or further on, or lower down, and there are some new lines and tints to delight us which we had not before detected.

The BOOK grows new to us as to us new experiences come. A larger knowledge of men, a deeper insight into human thoughts and motives, a better understanding of ourselves, give insight. Sorrow also sometimes helps us. God hath many interpreters of his word. Among the best of the human helps in this ministry is the sorrow of the submissive heart. Tears may dim one's eyes as he looks earthward. Tears usually clarify the vision that is turned inward and upward. Sorrow puts the heart at the work of interpretation. Sorrow helps one "to read between the lines." One can always read better with his heart than with the merely intellectual faculties.

The other world grows more real as we lose our hold of this world, and the BOOK of the other world is more precious as that world becomes more real. Therefore, after all, better than the illuminations of scholarship, of wide research, or of wise exegesis, is the inward experience of the submissive saint—as an interpreter of the divine testimonies. Better such commentary than the massive libraries of those who are merely learned in the letter of revelation.

We do, then, a wise thing when we bring together the rich testimonies of many Christian scholars who, in all climes, and through all centuries, have studied the word of God out of aching, longing hearts. Their eyes were wet with tears; their pens were dipped in blood. And yet were their souls full of joy and their words are freighted with spiritual meaning. What a college of interpretation do we have in their inner lives as recorded in letter, essay, sermon, conversation, and commentary!

This compilation of expository and spiritual thoughts for the lessons of the current year, collated principally by our competent and earnest friend, REV. J. L. HURLBUT, A.M., derives new value from the thought that they are the products of divine providence and grace in human lives, and that, as such, they give new and forcible expositions to the divine word.

In connection with these compilations are provided "Root Thoughts" which aim to present in, we trust, a somewhat fresh and helpful way, the innermost and central teachings of the several lessons.

Let us not, however, through the personal experiences of men, be diverted from the WORD itself, for it is still THE WORD OF GOD, and the best human contributions to its unfolding are dependent upon the Holy Spirit who at first inspired the BOOK their experiences translate. And our success in reading them as they make clear the WORD depends upon the same divine SPIRIT, whose influence let us humbly, devoutly, and believingly invoke!

J. H. VINCENT.

NEW YORK, *October*, 1882.

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LESSONS AND GOLDEN TEXTS FOR 1883.

STUDIES IN THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES.

First Quarter.

Lesson

- I. Jan. 7.—THE ASCENDING LORD. Acts 1. 1-14.
Commit vs. 8-11. GOLDEN TEXT: And when he had spoken these things, while they beheld, he was taken up. Acts 1. 9.
- II. Jan. 14.—THE DESCENDING SPIRIT. Acts 2. 1-16.
Commit vs. 1-4. GOLDEN TEXT: And they were all filled with the Holy Ghost. Acts 2. 4.
- III. Jan. 21.—THE BELIEVING PEOPLE. Acts 2. 37-47.
Commit vs. 38-41. GOLDEN TEXT: Then they that gladly received his word were baptized. Acts 2. 41.
- IV. Jan. 28.—THE HEALING POWER. Acts 3. 1-11.
Commit vs. 6-8. GOLDEN TEXT: Then shall the lame man leap as an hart, and the tongue of the dumb sing. Isa. 35. 6.
- V. Feb. 4.—THE PRINCE OF LIFE. Acts 3. 12-21.
Commit vs. 13-16. GOLDEN TEXT: In him was life; and the life was the light of men. John 1. 4.
- VI. Feb. 11.—NONE OTHER NAME. Acts 4. 1-14.
Commit vs. 10-13. GOLDEN TEXT: Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men whereby we must be saved. Acts 4. 12.
- VII. Feb. 18.—CHRISTIAN COURAGE. Acts 4. 18-31.
Commit vs. 29-31. GOLDEN TEXT: If God be for us, who can be against us? Rom. 8. 31.
- VIII. Feb. 25.—ANANIAS AND SAPPHIRA. Acts 5. 1-11. *Commit vs.* 9-11. GOLDEN TEXT: Lying lips are abomination to the Lord. Prov. 12. 22.
- IX. March 4.—PERSECUTION RENEWED. Acts 5. 17-32. *Commit vs.* 27-29. GOLDEN TEXT: We ought to obey God rather than men. Acts 5. 29.
- X. March 11.—THE SEVEN CHOSEN. Acts 6. 1-15.
Commit vs. 6-8. GOLDEN TEXT: Seven men of honest report, full of the Holy Ghost and wisdom. Acts 6. 3.
- XI. March 18.—THE FIRST CHRISTIAN MARTYR. Acts 7. 54-60, and 8. 1-4. *Commit vs.* 54-60. GOLDEN TEXT: Be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life. Rev. 2. 10.
- XII. March 25.—REVIEW; or, Missionary, Temperance, or other Lesson selected by the school.

Second Quarter.

Lesson

- I. April 1.—SIMON THE SORCERER. Acts 8. 14-25.
Commit vs. 20-23. GOLDEN TEXT: Thy heart is not right in the sight of God. Acts 8. 21.

Lesson

- II. April 8.—PHILIP AND THE ETHIOPIAN. Acts 8. 26-40. *Commit vs.* 35-38. GOLDEN TEXT: And he went on his way rejoicing. Acts 8. 39.
- III. April 15.—SAUL'S CONVERSION. Acts 9. 1-18.
Commit vs. 1-6. GOLDEN TEXT: And he received sight forthwith, and arose, and was baptized. Acts 9. 18.
- IV. April 22.—SAUL PREACHING CHRIST. Acts 9. 19-31. *Commit vs.* 20-22. GOLDEN TEXT: He which persecuted us in times past, now preacheth the faith which once he destroyed. Gal. 1. 23.
- V. April 29.—PETER WORKING MIRACLES. Acts 9. 32-43. *Commit vs.* 32-35. GOLDEN TEXT: Jesus Christ maketh thee whole. Act 9. 34.
- VI. May 6.—PETER PREACHING TO THE GENTILES. Acts 10. 30-44. *Commit vs.* 42-44. GOLDEN TEXT: On the Gentiles also was poured out the gift of the Holy Ghost. Acts 10. 45.
- VII. May 13.—THE SPREAD OF THE GOSPEL. Acts 11. 19-30. *Commit vs.* 21-26. GOLDEN TEXT: And the hand of the Lord was with them: and a great number believed, and turned unto the Lord. Acts 11. 21.
- VIII. May 20.—HEROD AND PETER. Acts 12. 1-17.
Commit vs. 5-8. GOLDEN TEXT: The angel of the Lord encampeth round about them that fear him. Psa. 34. 7.
- IX. May 27.—PAUL AND BARNABAS IN CYPRUS. Acts 13. 1-12. *Commit vs.* 2-4. GOLDEN TEXT: Separate me Barnabas and Saul for the work whereunto I have called them. Acts 13. 2.
- X. June 3.—AT ANTIOCH. Acts 13. 13-16, and 43-52.
Commit vs. 47-49. GOLDEN TEXT: And the word of the Lord was published throughout all the region. Acts 13. 49.
- XI. June 10.—AT ICONIUM AND LYSTRA. Acts 14. 1-18. *Commit vs.* 15-18. GOLDEN TEXT: Speaking boldly in the Lord. Acts 14. 3.
- XII. June 17.—END OF FIRST MISSIONARY JOURNEY. Acts 14. 19-23. *Commit vs.* 21-23. GOLDEN TEXT: Go ye, therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. Matt. 28. 19.
- XIII. June 24.—REVIEW; or, Missionary, Temperance, or other Lesson selected by the school.

LESSONS FOR 1883.

STUDIES IN THE OLD TESTAMENT.

Third Quarter.

Lesson

- I. July 1.—JOSHUA, SUCCESSOR TO MOSES. Josh. 1. 1-9. *Commit vs. 6, 7.* GOLDEN TEXT: Be strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might. Eph. 6. 10.
- II. July 8.—PASSING OVER JORDAN. Josh. 3. 5-17. *Commit vs. 7-9.* GOLDEN TEXT: When thou passest through the waters, I will be with thee; and through the rivers, they shall not overflow thee. Isa. 43. 2.
- III. July 15.—THE PLAINS OF JERICHO. Josh. 5. 10-15, and 6. 1-5. *Commit vs. 13-15.* GOLDEN TEXT: By faith the walls of Jericho fell down, after they were compassed about seven days. Heb. 11. 30.
- IV. July 22.—ISRAEL DEFEATED AT AI. Josh. 7. 10-26. *Commit vs. 10-12.* GOLDEN TEXT: Be sure your sin will find you out. Num. 32. 23.
- V. July 29.—THE READING OF THE LAW. Josh. 8. 30-35. *Commit vs. 33-35.* GOLDEN TEXT: I have set before you life and death, blessing and cursing. Deut. 30. 19.
- VI. Aug. 5.—THE CITIES OF REFUGE. Josh. 20. 1-9. *Commit vs. 1-3.* GOLDEN TEXT: Who have fled for refuge to lay hold upon the hope set before us. Heb. 6. 18.
- VII. Aug. 12.—THE LAST DAYS OF JOSHUA. Josh. 24. 14-29. *Commit vs. 14-16.* GOLDEN TEXT: Choose you this day whom ye will serve. Josh. 24. 15.
- VIII. Aug. 19.—ISRAEL FORSAKING GOD. Judg. 2. 6-16. *Commit vs. 14-16.* GOLDEN TEXT: And they forsook the Lord God of their fathers. Judg. 2. 12.
- IX. Aug. 26.—GIDEON'S ARMY. Judg. 7. 1-8. *Commit vs. 2, 3.* GOLDEN TEXT: The sword of the Lord, and of Gideon. Judg. 7. 20.
- X. Sept. 2.—THE DEATH OF SAMSON. Judg. 16. 21-31. *Commit vs. 28-30.* GOLDEN TEXT: The God of Israel is he that giveth strength and power unto his people. Ps. 68. 35.
- XI. Sept. 9.—RUTH AND NAOMI. Ruth 1. 14-22. *Commit vs. 16, 17.* GOLDEN TEXT: Thy people shall be my people, and thy God my God. Ruth 1. 16.
- XII. Sept. 16.—A PRAYING MOTHER. 1 Sam. 1. 21-28. *Commit vs. 26-28.* GOLDEN TEXT: I have lent him to the Lord; as long as he liveth he shall be lent to the Lord. 1 Sam. 1. 28.
- XIII. Sept. 23.—THE CHILD SAMUEL. 1 Sam. 3. 1-19. *Commit vs. 10-13.* GOLDEN TEXT: Speak, Lord; for thy servant heareth. 1 Sam. 3. 9.
- XIV. Sept. 30.—REVIEW; or, Missionary, Temperance, or other Lesson selected by the school.

Fourth Quarter.

Lesson

- I. Oct. 7.—ELI'S DEATH. 1 Sam. 4. 10-18. *Commit vs. 17, 18.* GOLDEN TEXT: His sons made themselves vile, and he restrained them not. 1 Sam. 3. 13.
- II. Oct. 14.—SAMUEL THE JUDGE. 1 Sam. 7. 3-17. *Commit vs. 12, 13.* GOLDEN TEXT: Hitherto hath the Lord helped us. 1 Sam. 7. 12.
- III. Oct. 21.—ASKING FOR A KING. 1 Sam. 8. 1-10. *Commit vs. 4-6.* GOLDEN TEXT: It is better to trust in the Lord than to put confidence in princes. Ps. 118. 9.
- IV. Oct. 28.—SAUL CHOSEN KING. 1 Sam. 10. 17-27. *Commit vs. 18, 19.* GOLDEN TEXT: And all the people shouted, and said, God save the king. 1 Sam. 10. 24.
- V. Nov. 4.—SAMUEL'S FAREWELL ADDRESS. 1 Sam. 12. 13-25. *Commit vs. 23-25.* GOLDEN TEXT: Only fear the Lord, and serve him in truth with all your heart: for consider how great things he hath done for you. 1 Sam. 12. 24.
- VI. Nov. 11.—SAUL REJECTED. 1 Sam. 15. 12-26. *Commit vs. 24-26.* GOLDEN TEXT: Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice. 1 Sam. 15-22.
- VII. Nov. 18.—DAVID ANOINTED. 1 Sam. 16. 1-13. *Commit vs. 6, 7.* GOLDEN TEXT: I have found David my servant; with my holy oil have I anointed him. Ps. 89. 20.
- VIII. Nov. 25.—DAVID AND GOLIATH. 1 Sam. 17. 38-51. *Commit vs. 45, 46.* GOLDEN TEXT: The battle is the Lord's. 1 Sam. 17. 47.
- IX. Dec. 2.—DAVID'S ENEMY—SAUL. 1 Sam. 18. 1-16. *Commit vs. 14-16.* GOLDEN TEXT: And David behaved himself wisely in all his ways; and the Lord was with him. 1 Sam. 18. 14.
- X. Dec. 9.—DAVID'S FRIEND—JONATHAN. 1 Sam. 20. 32-42. *Commit vs. 41, 42.* GOLDEN TEXT: A man that hath friends must show himself friendly: and there is a friend that sticketh closer than a brother. Prov. 18. 24.
- XI. Dec. 16.—DAVID SPARING HIS ENEMY. 1 Sam. 24. 1-17. *Commit vs. 15-17.* GOLDEN TEXT: But I say unto you, Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you. Matt. 5. 44.
- XII. Dec. 23.—DEATH OF SAUL AND JONATHAN. 1 Sam. 31. 1-13. *Commit vs. 11-13.* GOLDEN TEXT: The wicked is driven away in his wickedness: but the righteous hath hope in his death. Prov. 14. 32.
- XIII. Dec. 30.—REVIEW; or, Missionary, Temperance, or other Lesson selected by the school.

MAP OF THE HOLY LAND

Corrected by
F. S. DE HASS, D. D.

1880.

Scale of Miles
0 6 10 15 20 25



TRIBAL. REFERENCES.

I. JUDAH.

1. Maon
2. Carmel
3. Juttah
4. Dumah
5. Tekoa
6. Libnah
7. Lachish
8. Hazor
9. Makkedah
10. Adullam Cave

II. SIMEON.

III. BENJAMIN.

1. Rimmon
2. Gibeah
3. Michmash
4. Geba
5. Anathoth
6. Nob
7. Gibeah
8. Mizpeh

IV. DAN.

V. EPHRAIM.

VI. MANASSEH.

VII. ZEBULON.

VIII. ISSACHAR.

IX. ASHER.

X. NAPHTALI.

XI. MANASSEH.

XII. GAD.

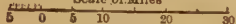
XIII. REUBEN.

PALESTINE

in the time of
CHRIST

Phillips & Hunt, 805 Broadway N. Y.

Scale of Miles





THE WONDERFUL WORD OF CHRIST.

THE Bible is the "word of Christ." He is the central theme of it. To him all the history, poetry, and prophecy of the Old Testament point. The New Testament is full of his works and words. His person is the key to all that precedes and to all that follows the record of his life by the four evangelists. There is a thread that binds every verse in the Bible to Jesus; and when you come to him, these threads seem like so many rays of golden light proceeding from him and irradiating the word.

The Bible is the word of Christ in that it expresses his wisdom and love. "The mind that is in Jesus" fills the book. All fundamental principles of morality and religion in it center in him.

The Bible is the word of Christ from beginning to end. This is a great thing to say about a volume of sixty-six different books, written by at least forty different persons, at different periods of time—the extremes reaching over two thousand years—written in different parts of the world, in different languages, under different forms of civilization, and under different governments. But in this word, of which he is the center, we find a unity the most harmonious, doctrines the most profound, poetry the most sublime, precepts the most pure, and promises the most elevating, all by their power and inspiration uplifting whole races of men in all times and in all regions.

The Bible is the word of Christ in that the Author still lives and operates among men. Of any departed man it may be said, "He being dead, yet speaketh." In this sense Homer and Plato and all other great men live to-day. So the dead father lives in his household, and by remembered looks and words influences his family. But Christ, in a deeper sense, is still in his word. Mystically, invisibly, really, Christ is in the Scriptures. There is a sense in which we may say the book is his divine body. In this respect it is unlike every other book which conveys and perpetuates the matter and the modes of men's thinking. This book is the medium of the spiritual personal forces of the Lord Christ himself.

We need not ascend into heaven to bring Christ down from above. We need not descend into the deep to bring up Christ from the dead. Seekest thou the Christ? Hear this answer: "The word is nigh thee." Jesus of Nazareth, the Alpha and Omega, whom shepherds worshiped and wise men sought, whom the multitudes cursed and the soldiers crucified, whom Joseph buried and the eternal God raised from the dead, that Jesus, "the same yesterday, to-day, and forever," is here in his word. He is here ready to give sight to the blind, hearing to the deaf, healing to the leper, food to the hungry, deliverance to the demoniac, peace to the troubled, life to the dead, pardon to the guilty, to the erring Magdalenes, the anxious Marthas, the unstable and repentant Peters. Are ye in quest of Christ? He is here, through his Spirit, in this holy word.

THE WONDERFUL WORD OF CHRIST.

All the mighty energies of grace which from Jesus Christ come to the human soul, are conveyed through the truth of his word: Conviction, conversion, enlightenment, regeneration, success in prayer, deliverance from sin, stability, strength, freedom, sanctification, victory in conflict, oneness with God, strength of character, all come through the word that is "quick and powerful," "perfect," the "word of his grace."

One cannot wonder that *David* sang: "Blessed is the man that walketh not in the counsel of the ungodly. . . His delight is in the law of the Lord, and in his law doth he meditate day and night." One cannot wonder that he sang: "O how love I thy law. I love thy commandments above gold, yea above fine gold. The law of thy mouth is better to me than gold and silver."

One cannot wonder at *Sir Walter Scott*, who, on his death-bed, when he asked for a book, was asked, "What book?" replied, "There is only one book—the Bible. In the whole world it is the *one book*, the other books are mere leaves, fragments. The Bible is the only complete, perfect book. Its light sheds brightness over the grave and into eternity. It is the only book!"

One cannot wonder at the good old soul in London who, when asked by some one if she had a Bible answered, "Did ye ask me if I had a Bible? did ye ask me if I had a Bible? Thank God I have a Bible! What should I do without my Bible? It was the guide of my youth, and it is the staff of my age. It wounded me, and it healed me. It condemned me, and it acquitted me. It showed me I was a sinner, and it led me to the Saviour. It has given me hope in life, and I trust it will give me comfort in death."

One cannot wonder at the estimation in which this word was held by the ancient *Jews* who, in one of their maxims said, "None is of noble spirit who does not employ himself in the study of the law." And they represent God as saying to *David*, "I am better pleased with one day in which thou sittest and studieth the law than I shall be with a thousand sacrifices which thy son Solomon shall offer upon my altar." And there was a Jewish opinion to the effect that "in whatsoever place the law is, there the *Shekinah* is present with it." And one can scarcely wonder at the tradition concerning *Jonathan Ben-Uzziel*, one of the pupils of the illustrious *Hillel*, which represents that "when he studied the law, every bird that flew over his head was burned up."

"Still we believe, Almighty Lord,
Whose presence fills both earth and heaven,
The meaning of thy written word
Is by thy inspiration given;
Thou only dost thyself explain
The secret mind of God to man.

"Come, then, Divine Interpreter,
The Scriptures to our hearts apply;
And, taught by thee, we God revere,
Him in three persons magnify;
And still the triune God adore,
Who was and is for evermore."

TRIBUTES TO THE WORD OF CHRIST.

THE scholars have studied it, and the saints have loved it. Tributes to its excellence come from the lips of sages and of disciples. We here present some valuable records which bear testimony to the esteem in which the Book has been held by men—men of ancient and of modern times, of high and of humble repute, in the Church and out of it. This collection of testimonies may give us larger faith in its power and greater delight in its study.

The “golden-tongued” *Chrysostom* said, concerning the holy Scriptures: “For the divine Scripture says nothing rashly, or in a hap-hazard manner, but every syllable and letter, even, possesses a stored-up treasure.”

And again: “For as spices, according to their nature, give greater fragrance the more they are rubbed with the fingers: so also it happens in the Scriptures that the more one desires to investigate these, the more will he be able to see the treasure hidden in them, and to obtain the enjoyment of indescribable riches.”

And again: “The reading of the divine Scriptures, most beloved, is a great good. For this it is that endows the soul with the best qualities, this upbears the mind to heaven, this renders a man mindful of a kindness. This causes us to admire none of the present things; but ever to turn our minds to the other life, and looking to the reward of the Lord; to perform every work, and to apply ourselves to the labors of virtue with great cheerfulness. . . . Therefore let us find leisure for the reading of the divine Scriptures with great diligence.”

The Emperor *Theodosius* wrote out the whole New Testament with his own hand, and read some parts of it every day.

Theodosius the Second committed to memory a great part of the Scriptures.

George, Prince of Transylvania, read over the Scriptures twenty-seven times.

Sir John Harop, amid his other vocations, made the book of God so much his study that it lay before him night and day.

M. de Renty, a French nobleman, used to read daily three chapters of the Bible, with his head uncovered, and on his bended knees.

Lady Francis Hobart read the Psalms over twelve times a year, the New Testament thrice, and the other parts of the Old Testament once.

Susannah, Countess of Suffolk, for the last seven years of her life, read the whole Bible over twice annually.

Dr. Gouge used to read fifteen chapters every day, five in the morning, five after dinner, and five in the evening, before going to bed.

Mr. Jeremiah Whittaker usually read all the epistles in the Greek Testament twice every fortnight.

Joshua Barnes is said to have read a small pocket Bible, which he usually carried about with him, a hundred and twenty times over.

Mr. Robert Cotton read the whole Bible through twelve times a year.

TRIBUTES TO THE WORD OF CHRIST.

The Venerable *Bede* is said to have been a great reader of the Bible, and that with such affection he often wept over it.

Bonaventure wrote out the Scriptures twice, and learned most of them by heart.

Zwinglius wrote out St. Paul's epistles, and committed them to memory.

Rev. Mr. Romaine studied nothing but the Bible for the last thirty or forty years of his life.

A *poor prisoner*, being confined in a dark dungeon, had no light, except for a few moments when his food was brought to him; he used then to take his Bible and read a chapter, saying he could find his mouth in the dark, when he could not read.

Henry Willis, farmer, aged eighty-one, devoted every hour that could be spared from his labor during the course of so long a life, to the devout and serious perusal of the Holy Scriptures. He had read with the most minute attention all the books of the Old and New Testament eight times over, and had proceeded as far as the book of Job in his ninth reading, when his meditations were terminated in death.

Eusebius, the great ecclesiastical historian, gives this description of one *John*, a martyr from Egypt: "He had whole books of the sacred Scriptures written, as the apostle says, not on tables of stone, neither on skins of animals, nor papers destroyed by moths and time, but on the tables of flesh, in the heart, in an enlightened soul, and the pure eye of the mind. So that whenever he wished to produce any passage, whether from the law, or the prophets, or the apostles, the historical parts or the gospels, he could repeat and produce it, as from a treasury of learning whenever he pleased." Eusebius says: "I confess that I myself was astonished when I first saw the man standing in the midst of a large multitude, and repeating certain parts of the holy Scriptures. For as far as I had opportunity only to hear his voice, I thought that he was reading, as is usual in the congregation; but when I came near and saw the fact, all the others standing around, with their raised eyes, and him alone raising his mind and pronouncing without any artificial means, as a kind of prophet, and far surpassing those who were robust in body, I could not but glorify and praise God."

St. Jerome, in one of his letters, gives this account of the virgin *Marcella*: "Her eager desire for the divine Scriptures was incredible. . . . And because I was thought to have some reputation in the study of the Scriptures, she never met me but she asked me something respecting the Scriptures; nor did she agree with me at once, but she provoked questions from her opponent, not that she might contend with me, but that by inquiry she might obtain answers to those questions which she perceived admitted of a doubt." [Literally, of those things which she perceived could be opposed.]

Sir Isaac Newton said: "We account the Scriptures of God to be the most sublime philosophy."

John Milton: "There are no songs comparable to the songs of Zion, no orations equal to those of the prophets, and no politics like those which the Scriptures teach."

Lieut. Maury: "I have always found in my scientific studies that when I could get the Bible to say any thing upon a subject it afforded me a firm platform to stand upon, and a round in the ladder by which I could safely ascend."

TRIBUTES TO THE WORD OF CHRIST.

Sir William Jones : "I am of the opinion that the Bible contains more true sensibility, more exquisite beauty, more pure morality, more important history, and finer strains of poetry and eloquence, than can be collected from all other books, in whatever age or language they may be written."

Daniel Webster : "From the time that at my mother's feet or on my father's knee I first learned to lisp verses from the sacred writings they have been my daily study and vigilant contemplation. If there be any thing in my style or thoughts to be commended, the credit is due to my kind parents in instilling into my mind an early love of the Scriptures."

John Newton : "I have many books that I cannot sit down to read; they are indeed good and sound; but, like half-pence, there goes a great quantity to a small amount. There are *silver* books, and a very few *golden* books; but I have one book worth them all, called the Bible."

Coleridge : "I know the Bible is inspired, because it finds me at greater depths of my being than any other book."

Andrew Jackson : "That book, sir, is the rock upon which our republic rests."

"What will you leave your children?" was asked of *John Jay*, when dying. He replied, "They have the Book."

Cavendish : "As thieves be loth to assault a house where they know there be good armor and artillery, so wherever the books of the Holy Scriptures be well occupied and exercised, there neither the devil nor any of his angels dare come near."

Isaac Taylor : "The integrity of the records of the Christian faith is substantiated by evidence in a tenfold proportion more various, copious, and conclusive than that which can be adduced in support of any other ancient writings."

Sir Walter Scott :

"Within this ample volume lies
The mystery of mysteries;
Happiest they of human race
To whom their God has given grace
To read, to fear, to hope, to pray,
To lift the latch, to force the way;
And better had they ne'er been born
That read to doubt or read to scorn."

"Stars are poor books, and oftentimes do miss;
This Book of Stars lights to eternal bliss."

Pollok :

"This Lamp from off the everlasting throne
Mercy took down, and in the night of time
Stood, casting on the dark her gracious brow,
And evermore beseeching men with tears
And earnest sighs, to read, believe, and live."

Richard Crashaw :

"It is the armory of light:
Let constant use but keep it bright,
You'll find it yields
To holy hands and humble hearts
More swords and shields
Than sin hath snares or hell hath darts."

Charles Wesley :

"O may the gracious Word divine,
Sweet subject of my converse be;
So will the Lord his foll'wer join,
And walk and talk himself with me;
So shall my heart his presence prove,
And burn with everlasting love."

"So we ring joy-bells, . . .
For the family Bible which lies on the stand,
The charm of our homes and the light of our
land."

Let us have faith in the unchanging Christ of this Book. The earth may pass away, but this word never. Man's works may perish, but the Scriptures of our God abide. In the "Eclipse of Faith" the author represents two friends in a theological controversy. One of them says, with reference to the Bible, "I be-

TRIBUTES TO THE WORD OF CHRIST.

lieve that it has received in this age its death-blow;" to which the other replies: "Ay, that is what the infidel has been always promising us; meantime *they* somehow perish, and *it* laughs at them. You remember, perhaps, the words of old Woolston, so many fragments of whose criticism, as those of many others, have been incorporated by Strauss. He had, as he elegantly expresses it, 'cut out such a piece of work for the Boylean lectures as should hold them tug as long as the ministry of the letter should last!' Poor soul! The fundamental principles of his infidelity are surrendered by Strauss himself. Similarly, a score of assailants of the Bible have appeared and vanished since his day; each proclaiming, just as he himself went to the bottom, that he had given the Bible its death-blow! Somehow, however, that singular book continues to flourish, to propagate itself, to speak all languages, to intermingle more and more with the literature of all civilized nations; while mankind will not accept, slaves as they are, the intellectual freedom you offer them. It is really very provoking; of what use is it to destroy the Bible so often when it lives the next minute? I have little doubt *your* new attempts will end just like the labors of the Rationalists of the Paulus school, so graphically described by a German writer. 'It is sad, no doubt,' says he, or something to the same effect, 'that after fifty years' exegetical grubbing, weeding, and pruning of the mighty primitive forest of the Bible, the next generation should persist in saying that the Rationalist had destroyed the forest only in his own added imagination, and that it is just as it was.'"

And let us resolve, with the South Sea islander, when he received for the first time a copy of the entire Bible in his own language: "My brethren and sisters, this is my resolve, The dust shall never cover my new Bible; the moth shall never eat it; the mildew shall never rot it, my life and my joy!"

INTRODUCTION TO THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES.

I. Authorship.—The Acts of the Apostles describes itself as a continuation of the third gospel; and the *common* object of both writings, (Luke 1. 3;) the *common* peculiarities in regard to language and style; the *common* building up of doctrine on Pauline principles and foundation; the *common* striving after exactness, prove irrefragably that the author of the third gospel, the physician Luke, must on no account be separated from the author of the Acts of the Apostles.—*Canon Cook*. The word "Acts" seems to have been in common use in the first and second centuries after Christ, for what we should call "memoirs" or "biographies," and appears conspicuously in the apocryphal literature of the New Testament, as in the Acts of Pilate, the Acts of Peter and Paul, of Philip, of Matthew, of Bartholomew.—*E. H. Plumptre*. Dr. Davidson mentions no less than forty-seven terms which are peculiar to the writer, and which occur in both works, but nowhere else in the New Testament.—*P. J. Gloag*.

Testimonies in the ancient Church to its authorship.—(1) The first verse of the book claims it to be by the author of the Gospel of Luke. (2) It was undoubtedly in the canon of *Scriptures* of the apostolic Church, growing as we have above described. The Syriac translation of the New Testament, called the *Peshito*, made probably, or at least commenced, before the canon was complete, contains Luke in its present position. (3) Eusebius places it as Luke's among those books that were *never disputed in the Church*. It is quoted by the earliest Christian writers, as Polycarp, the Clementine Recognitions, and the Churches of Lyons and Vienna. (4) It is expressly attributed to Luke by Irenaeus, who was the hearer of Polycarp, the hearer of St. John the Apostle.—*Whedon*.

II. Time of writing.—This book being continued to the second year of Paul's imprisonment, could not have been written before A. D. 63; and as his death in 65 is not mentioned, was probably composed before (probably A. D. 64).—*Horne*.

III. Place of writing.—As to the place, there is a general unanimity among late critics. Most of those who deny, and those who maintain the authenticity of the work, agree that in all probability it was written or first published in Rome. It is evident that the writer supposes on the part of his readers a perfect familiarity with the geography of the neighborhood, and of the places visited on the approach to Italy. No other hypothesis indeed is likely to suggest itself to any one who admits that the his-

torian passed two whole years at Rome in the companionship of Paul.—*Canon Cook*.

IV. Sources of information.—The sources of Luke's information may be considered as threefold; personal observation, oral testimony, and perhaps written documents. The first and most direct source of information was *personal observation*. Luke was the companion of Paul during a part of his travels, and was an eye-witness of several of the transactions which he relates. He was with Paul during his first visit to Philippi, he accompanied him on his last journey to Jerusalem, and sailed with him to Rome. In all probability he was present at Jerusalem when the apostle was arrested; and it is also likely that he was at Caesarea during a portion of the two years of the apostle's imprisonment in that city, for it was from Caesarea that he embarked with him to Rome. The account of the voyage to Rome bears indubitable marks of being written by one who was present. The second source of information is that derived from the *testimony of others*. Now here Luke would be chiefly indebted to Paul himself. From his own mouth he would learn the account of that apostle's conversion and missionary journeys, so that the information contained in the whole of the second part of the Acts (chaps. 13-28) may be accounted for without having recourse to the supposition of written sources. When in Judea, where he probably resided during the two years of Paul's imprisonment at Caesarea, he would procure information from James and the Church of Jerusalem; from them he might derive his accounts of the ascension, the miracle of Pentecost, the acts of Peter, the dispute between the Hellenists and the Hebrews, the martyrdom of Stephen and of the Apostle James. And there is also the information which he would obtain from the Church of Caesarea; in that city he met with Philip the Evangelist, (Acts 21. 8,) and perhaps also with Cornelius the devout centurion. From this source he would derive his information concerning the evangelistic labors in Samaria, the conversion of the Ethiopian eunuch, the visions made to Peter and Cornelius, and the particulars connected with the death of Herod Agrippa. The third source of information mentioned is *written documents*. It is indeed questioned whether there were any such used by Luke in his composition of the Acts. So far as we can see, the accounts contained in it might be obtained from the direct testimony of the eye-witnesses themselves; and if so, it is more probable that Luke would derive his information from

INTRODUCTION TO THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES.

this quarter than from any written sources. On the other hand, most biblical critics interpret the introduction to Luke's Gospel as a declaration on the part of the author that he availed himself of written documents in preparing that work. If, then, it is argued he employed written documents in the composition of his gospel, the probability is that he also employed them in the composition of his history of the apostles. Besides, it is a remarkable fact that though the style of the Acts is substantially the same throughout, yet there is a greater number of Hebraisms in the first part, where he depended on information at second hand, than in the second part, where he was indebted to his own observation.—*P. J. Gloag.*

V. Evidences of its authenticity.—(1) It is connected with Paul's Epistles (as was amply and ingeniously shown by Paley in his "*Horæ Paulinæ*") by the most striking and obviously undesigned coincidences, showing with a most convincing power to the patient student the authenticity and genuineness of both. (2) In its immense amount of connections with contemporaneous geography and history it is forcibly confirmed as accurate by history, coins, and medals. (3) The narrative of Paul's shipwreck has been minutely examined by modern science, and all its details have been found completely true to nature and to the seamanship of the Mediterranean of Paul's day.—*Whedon.*

VI. Its title.—The title "The Acts of the Apostles," is generally assumed not to have been given to this work by Luke himself. It is however of high antiquity. It is extant in the oldest MSS. Some of the most ancient Versions, the Coptic, the Syriac, and the Arabic Erpenii, retain the Greek word unchanged, a fact which proves very early and general acceptance. We find it in the Canon Muratori as the recognized designation of the book, and it is repeatedly used by early fathers from Clement Alexander downward.—*Canon Cook.*

VII. Its general aim.—A yet more appropriate title would be (using the term in its familiar literary sense) that of the *Origines Ecclesiæ*—the history of the growth and development of the Church of Christ, and of the mission work of that Church among the Gentiles. The starting-point and the close of the book are in this respect significant. It

begins at Jerusalem; it ends at Rome. When it opens, circumcision is required, as well as baptism, of every disciple; the Church of Christ is outwardly but a Jewish sect of some hundred and twenty persons, (chap. 1. 15.) When it ends, every barrier between Jew and Gentile has been broken down, and the Church has become catholic and all-embracing. To trace the stages of that expansion, both locally and as affecting the teaching of the Church, is the dominant purpose of the book. The "acts" of those who were not concerned in it at all, or played but a subordinate part in it, are, we may venture to say, deliberately passed over. Some principle of selection is clearly involved in the structure of such a book as that now before us, and even without going beyond the four corners of the book itself, we may safely affirm that the main purpose of the writer was to inform a Gentile convert of Rome how the gospel had been brought to him, and how it had gained the width and freedom with which it was actually presented.—*E. H. Plumptre.*

VIII. Outline of its Contents.—I. *The Pentecostal Church; or, Christianity within the Jews*, (chap. 1-8. 4.) (1) Preparation for the pentecost, (1. 1-26.) (2) Event of the Pentecost, (2. 1-47.) (3) Pentecostal Church unfolding in miracle and endurance of persecution, (3. 1-4. 37.) (4) Pentecostal Church unfolding in penal power, (5. 1-16.) (5) Pentecostal Church in second persecution, (5. 17-42.) (6) Pentecostal Church forming its economy, (6. 1-8.) (7) Pentecostal Church in last struggle and dispersion, (6. 8-8. 4.) II. *The Transition Church—from Jews to Gentiles*, (8. 4-12. 25.) (1) The deacon Philip evangelizes Samaria, (8. 5-25.) (2) The new Apostle of the Gentiles called, (9. 1-30.) (3) Gentile induction; new Christian center, Gentile Antioch, (10. 1-11. 30.) (4) Desolation of Jerusalem Church by Herod; its avenging, (12. 1-25.) III. *Church among the Gentiles*, (13. 1-28. 31.) (1) Paul's first mission from Antioch, (13. 1-14. 28.) (2) Jerusalem Council on Circumcision, (15. 1-34.) (3) Paul's second mission from Antioch, (15. 35-18. 23.) (4) Paul's third mission from Antioch, (18. 23-21. 17.) (5) Paul in council with James—Arrest—Sent to Cæsarea, (21. 18-23. 35.) (6) Paul's two years at Cæsarea, (24. 1-26. 32.) (7) Paul en route for Rome; at Rome, (27. 1-28. 31.)—*Whedon.*

THE LESSON COMMENTARY.

FIRST QUARTER.

STUDIES IN THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES.

A. D. 30.]

LESSON I.

[Jan. 7.

THE ASCENDING LORD.—Acts 1. 1-14.

GOLDEN TEXT.—And when he had spoken these things, while they beheld, he was taken up.
Acts 1. 9.

TIME.—A. D. 30, forty days after the resurrection.

PLACE.—Near Bethany on Mount Olivet.

INTRODUCTION.—From among the events of the forty days Luke selects those only now which are preparatory to the great manifestation at the Pentecost. For, just as the section of the Gospel immediately succeeding the introduction narrates the preparation for the advent of the Son; so this section presents the preparation for that great advent of the Spirit. Hence we have in this chapter successively (1) The command to wait at Jerusalem for the Pentecostal baptism, (4, 5.) (2) The promise of the gift, or *charisma*, of power, (6-8.) (3) The ascension, which was the necessary condition of the Spirit's mission, (9-14.) (4) The re-completion of the apostolic number, in order that the full Twelve may receive the Pentecostal inauguration, (15-26.)—*Whedon*. This latter treatise does not begin precisely where the former treatise ends. By design, and not by accident, the two overlap each other. The resurrection and ascension of Christ constitute the last portion of the Gospel and the first portion of the Acts. The same facts appear at the close of one book and at the outset of another. Thus, when a bridge of two arches spans a deep river, both arches lean on one pillar that rises in the middle of the flood. In the midst of the gulf that separated God and man, and in the midst, too, of the tide of time, stood Jesus; on him the Old Dispensation rests, and on him the New.—*W. Arnold*.

Authorized Version.

1 The former treatise have I made,
10 The-oph'i-lus, of all that Je'sus be-
gan both to do and teach,

2 Until ²the day in which he was
taken up, after that he through the Holy
Ghost had given commandments unto
the apostles whom he had chosen :

¹ Luke 1. 3.—² 1 Tim. 3. 16; Heb. 1. 2.

1. The former treatise—The reference is to the Gospel according to Luke, which was evidently written by the writer of the Acts. A modest name for his Gospel.—*Chrysostom*. The-ophilus—"Lover of God." Probably a Gentile convert, not resident in the Holy Land, or he could not have needed the many explanations of places and usages. He is said by Theophylact to have been of senatorial rank; and the title prefixed in the opening of the Gospel has been thought to imply that he was a provincial governor. The address here is less ceremonious than in the opening of the Gospel, [perhaps] indicating that in the interval Luke's friendship with him had become more intimate.—*Canon Cook*. All that—Not to be understood literally; all that

Revised Version.

1 The ¹former treatise I made, O The-
oph'i-lus, concerning all that Je'sus be-
2 gan both to do and to teach, until the
day in which he was received up,
after that he had given commandment
through the ²Holy Ghost unto the
3 apostles whom he had chosen: to

¹ Gr. *first*.—² Or, *Holy Spirit*: and so throughout this book.

was most important, all that was requisite for the instruction of a catechumen.—*Canon Cook*. Je-sus began—"Began" is not a pleonastic or superfluous expression, but emphatic, and suggestive of two important facts. The first is, that what our Saviour did, he did for the first time; no one ever did it before him. The second is, that which he thus began in person upon earth was afterward continued by his apostles, under the influence and guidance of his Spirit.—*J. A. Alexander*. To do and teach—Christ *preached* his own *life*, and *lived* his own *doctrine*.—*Chubb*.

2. Until the day—The very day, a form of speech implying a precise chronological specification.—*J. A. Alexander*. He was taken up [Rev. Ver. *received up*].—The phrase *he* was

Authorized Version.

3 To ³whom also he showed himself alive after his passion by many infallible proofs, being seen of them forty days, and speaking of the things pertaining to the kingdom of God :

4 And, ⁴being assembled together with *them*, commanded them that they should not depart from Je-ru'sa-lem, but wait for the promise of the Father, ⁴which, *saith he*, ye have heard of me.

3 1 Cor. 15. 5.—⁴Or, eating together with them; Luke 24. 43.—
4 John 14. 16.

taken up describes the ascension as an *experience* of Jesus; that is, an act of God the Father.—*Lechler*. Through the Holy Ghost—The words may denote either the spiritual influence under which our Saviour's mediatorial acts were all performed, or the influence by which his last instructions were accompanied, and by which the apostles were enabled to obey them. The second explanation is more obvious, and better suited to the context.—*J. A. Alexander*. **Commandments**—The reference may be specially, though not, perhaps, exclusively, to the great apostolical commission recorded by Matthew (28. 18-20) and Mark, (16. 15, 16,) as well as to the specific charge recorded in Luke 24. 49, and in verse 4 below.—*J. A. Alexander*. **The apostles**—The word means "those sent forth." It is used with reference to the Twelve, and in the Acts supersedes the term "disciples" generally employed in the Gospels. It is the fitting designation here, the period of discipleship having passed by. **Whom he had chosen**—Christ's choice is always attended with his charge. Those whom he elected to apostleship expected preferments, but, instead, he gave them commandments.—*M. Henry*.

3. **Showed himself alive**—Christ showed himself to the apostles *alive*; this circumstance indicates the high importance of the resurrection with respect to our faith. Comp. 1 Cor. 15. 14-16. The fact that "He lives" is the principle of life—the *punctum saliens*—of Christianity; it is the main support—the heart—of all Christian faith, charity, and hope.—*Lechler*. **After his passion**—Or "suffering." This primary sense of the word "passion" has fallen into disuse; but it is nobly consecrated in the phraseology of the Church to express the Redeemer's final endurance.—*D. Brown*. **Infallible proofs** [the word *infallible* is omitted in the Rev. Ver.]—There is no adjective in the Greek answering to "infallible," but the noun is one which was used by writers on rhetoric (*e. g.*, Aristotle, *Rhet.*, 1, 2)

Revised Version.

whom he also ³shewed himself alive after his passion by many proofs, appearing unto them by the space of forty days, and speaking the things concerning the kingdom of God :
4 and, ⁴being assembled together with them, he charged them not to depart from Je-ru'sa-lem, but to wait for the promise of the Father, which, *said he*,
5 ye heard from me: for John indeed

3 Gr. presented.—Or, eating with them.

for proofs that carried certainty of conviction with them, as contrasted with those that were only probable or circumstantial. No other New Testament writer uses it.—*E. H. Plumptre*. **Speaking of**—*Of* is not in the original, and is superfluous in the translation. He not only *spoke of* or *about the things*, etc., but he uttered or declared the things themselves.—*J. A. Alexander*. **Seen of them forty days**—It is hardly possible to give in English the exact force of the original, which implies that he was occasionally seen by them during a period of forty days.—*Alford*. **The kingdom of God**—Not that a large body of new teachings was given, but the *kingdom of God* was the topic of all he did say.—*Whedon*.

The Kingdom of Heaven pervaded our Lord's discourses; it was in the beginning, in the progress, and at the close of them.—*Bellarmino*.

4. **Being assembled**—Or "meeting with them" by a previous appointment, not by accident. **Commanded** is a different verb from that in verse 2, and denotes a peremptory order, such as a military word of command.—*J. A. Alexander*. **Not depart from Jerusalem**—Though the disciples had already been in Galilee, and though Jerusalem was the most dangerous spot in the world for them, yet now they are there divinely imprisoned by the Lord's word. And this for several reasons: (1) In Jerusalem, Jesus had performed mighty works; had been rejected and slain; and just there it was fitting that his name should be first received and maintained. (2) In no place could the pentecostal manifestation and other first displays of the power of the new religion so startle the attention of the nation as at its theocratic capital. (3) As there the sacrifices had for ages been offered, and there the last sacrifice, namely, of the Lamb of God, so that was the true starting-point for the religion of the cross. (4) All this accorded with the prophecy, "Out of Zion shall go forth the law, and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem." Isa. 2. 3, 5. And, finally, together they must stay

Authorized Version.

5 For ^aJohn truly baptized with water; but ^eye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost not many days hence.

6 When they therefore were come together, they asked of him, saying, Lord, wilt thou at this time restore ^again the kingdom to Is'ra-el?

7 And he said unto them, ^aIt is not for you to know the times or the seasons, which the Father hath put in his own power.

³ Chap. 11. 16.—⁶ Joel 3. 18; chap. 2. 4.—⁷ Isa. 1. 26, Dan. 7. 27; Amos 9. 11.—⁸ Deut. 29. 29; 1 Thess. 5. 1.

in order that together they may receive the one pentecostal unction.—*Whedon*. The promise of the Father—The promises which had been made through the prophets, (as in Joel 2. 28; Zech. 2. 10,) repeated by John the Baptist, and enlarged and made more definite by the Saviour himself, (John 14. 16; 15. 26; 16. 7, 13;) fulfilled in the descent of the Holy Spirit on the day of Pentecost, and his abiding with the Church. Which, saith he—This abrupt transition from the indirect to the direct form of expression, by the substitution of the first for the third person, is not uncommon in the best Greek writers, and a favorite idiom of the historians, both Greek and Latin.—*J. A. Alexander*.

A pentecostal shower must precede every sermon, in order that the latter may operate effectually and awaken men.—*Gossner*.

5. John—John the Baptist. For an account of his preaching and baptism see Matt. 3 and Luke 3. Baptized with water—As a type and precursor of the baptism of the Holy Ghost. Baptized with the Holy Ghost—Under the Old Dispensation it was the law, the type, the ritual, and the shadow that were prominent, and the Spirit was in the background; under the New, reverse-ly, all these retreat into the background, and the Spirit is predominate. This is the dispensation, not of the ritual, but of the Spirit. Hence it must be inaugurated by a full and overwhelming manifestation of the Spirit, as the Old was inaugurated by the physical splendor of Sinai.—*Whedon*. Not many days—Ten days. The Lord was with them forty days, (verse 3,) and they were baptized with the Holy Ghost on the fiftieth. Their faith was more tried by the vagueness of the expression than it would have been if the number had been specified; not many encouraged hope, and the indefiniteness induced watchfulness.—*Canon Cook*.

6. Therefore [Rev. Ver., *They therefore, when they were come together.*] Were come

Revised Version.

baptized with water; but ye shall be baptized ^awith the Holy Ghost not many days hence.

6 They therefore, when they were come together, asked him, saying, Lord, dost thou at this time restore

7 the kingdom to Is'ra-el? And he said unto them, It is not for you to know times or seasons, which the Father hath ^aset within his own authority.

⁵ Or, in.—⁶ Or, appointed by.

together—This *coming together* does not belong to another assembling, different from the former; but takes up again the "*assembling*" of verse 4.—*Alford*. Wilt thou at this time—In their eagerness they did not ask, When wilt thou? but, Wilt thou now?—*Canon Cook*. We cannot suppose that the apostles, after being so long associated with Christ, would entertain wholly carnal views concerning the Messianic kingdom. They probably imagined that the world would be gradually converted to Judaism, and that Jerusalem, the holy city, would be the resort of all nations; most evidently they had not the slightest conception of any other way by which the Gentiles could be admitted into the kingdom of God, except by embracing the Jewish religion.—*P. J. Gloag*.

7. Not for you to know—This is a general reproof and assertion, spoken with reference to men, as forbidden to search curiously into a point which omniscience has reserved—the times and seasons of the future divine dealing.—*Alford*. The times or seasons ["*The*" is omitted in Rev. Ver.].—By supplying the article, our version puts a limitation on the words, which may be true, but is not found in the original. It was not the times or seasons of this one case merely, but times or seasons generally, that they were forbidden to pry into.—*J. A. Alexander*. The word times here signifies the great current, and seasons the particular points or epochs of time.—*Whedon*. The Father—It is remarkable that not "*God*," but the Father is here used; and this cannot fail to remind us of that saying, (Mark 13. 32,) "But of that day or hour knoweth none, no not an angel in heaven, (so in our oldest MSS.,) nor even the Son, but the Father."—*Alford*. Put in his own power [Rev. Ver., "*Within his own authority.*"]—God is his own counselor, and, like a wise sovereign, keeps his own secrets of state.—*Whedon*.

There are secrets the Divine Bridegroom whis-

Authorized Version.

8 But ye shall receive ^bpower, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you : and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Je-ru^s-sa-lem, and in all Ju-de'a, and in Sa-ma^r-i-a, and unto the uttermost part of the earth.

9 And ^owhen he had spoken these things, while they beheld, he was taken up ; and a cloud received him out of their sight.

8 Or, the power of the Holy Ghost coming upon you.—9 John 6, 62.

pers not, that the Spirit and the Bride may still say "Come!" A sacred obscurity envelopes these awful secrets. The cloud that shrouded the actual Presence of God on the mercy-seat, shrouds still his expected Presence on the Throne of Judgment. It is a purposed obscurity, a most salutary and useful obscurity, a wise and merciful denial of knowledge. . . . To cherish anticipations, he has permitted gleams of light to cross the darkness ; to baffle presumption, he has made them only gleams.—*W. A. Butler.*

8. Ye shall receive power.—As the best means of bridling their curiosity, Christ recalls them both to God's promise and to his command.

—*Calvin.* This power should be first personal. As the coming of the Spirit of the Lord (Judg. 14. 6) strengthened the lower faculties of Samson so as to make him mighty in bodily vigor, so this coming of the Spirit should empower their higher faculties so as to render them Samsons in soul. The power should, secondly, be organic, giving them the visible headship in the theocracy ; placing them upon the twelve thrones of vicereignty in the kingdom. Matt. 19. 28. Such was to be the compensation in place of their vanishing visions of national restoration.

—*Whedon.* Witnesses unto me—They were to be witnesses of all that they had seen and heard from the beginning of their intercourse with Christ, (John 15. 27 ; Luke 24. 18,) his doctrines, miracles, life, death, resurrection, and ascension.—*J. A. Alexander.* Jerusalem—The Jews were in the habit of speaking of their capital apart from their country. Judea is to be understood here in the larger sense, comprising Galilee and the country beyond the Jordan.—*Canon Cook.* Uttermost parts—Like the ever-widening circles of water into which a stone has dropped, the Gospel should from its original center include the whole earth in its circumference. These names trace the enlarging advances in beautiful climax. And so Jesus at the beginning designed a universal religion.—*Whedon.*

They, it seems, did not at the time understand it

Revised Version.

8 But ye shall receive power, when the Holy Ghost is come upon you : and ye shall be my witnesses both in Je-ru^s-sa-lem, and in all Ju-de'a and Sa-ma^r-i-a, and unto the uttermost part

9 of the earth. And when he had said these things, as they were looking, he was taken up ; and a cloud received him out of their sight. And

as extending beyond Jews dispersed throughout the world.—*Canon Cook.*

He needs vessels to bear his name about among men : and for this purpose he chooses earthen vessels, that the power may be known to be his own. He does not send angels to publish his message ; he does not employ the thunder to proclaim his name, or the lightning to write his character in the sky. The life of his own disciples is the epistle in which he desires to be read. The evidence with which he will convince the world is the walk of the people whom he has bought with his blood and renewed by his Spirit.—*W. Arnot.*

9. While they beheld [Rev. Ver., "As they were looking."]—Seeing Christ after his resurrection qualified them for being witnesses of that fact : for their bearing personal testimony to his ascension it was necessary that they should see it. They were not left in amazement at his vanishing, as the two at Emmaus had been. —*Luke 24. 31.—Canon Cook.* He was taken up—There was something like a moral necessity, assuming the resurrection as a fact, for such a conclusion to our Lord's work on earth. Two other alternatives may, perhaps, be just imagined as possible : He might, like Lazarus, have lived out his restored life to its appointed term, and then died the common death of all men ; but in that case where would have been the victory over death, and the witness that he was the Son of God ? He might have lived on an endless life on earth ; but in this case, being such as he was, conflict, persecution, and suffering would have come again and again at every stage, and in each instance a miracle would have been needed to save the suffering from passing on to death, or many deaths must have been followed by many resurrections.—*E. H. Plumptre.* A cloud received him—The intervention of a cloud may have been designed to answer two important purposes ; first, that of making our Lord's transit from earth to heaven more distinctly visible ; and then that of recall-

Authorized Version.

10 And, while they looked stedfastly toward heaven as he went up, behold, two men stood by them in ¹⁰white apparel;

11 Which also said, Ye men of Gal'ilee, why stand ye gazing up into heaven? this same Je'sus, which is taken up from you into heaven, ¹¹shall so come in like manner as ye have seen him ¹¹go into heaven.

¹⁰ Chap. 10. 3.—¹¹ Dan. 7. 13; John 14. 3; 1 Thess. 1. 10; 4. 16;
2 Thess. 1. 10; Rev. 1. 7.

ing to the minds of the spectators the awful but familiar symbol of Jehovah's presence under the Old Testament.—*J. A. Alexander.*

As the high-priest on the day of atonement went through that curtain of blue and purple into the holiest of all, so Christ disappears now from the straining eyes of the disciples, going through the blue curtains of the heavens, and the purple clouds shut him out from their gaze. And the parallel does not end here. The disciples stand gazing up into heaven, exactly as the eyes of the Jewish worshipers followed the high-priest as he disappeared within the holy place.—*A. J. Gordon.*

While the going up of Elijah may be compared to the flight of a bird which none can follow, the ascension of Christ is, as it were, a bridge between heaven and earth, laid down for all who are drawn to him by his earthly existence.—*Baumgarten.*

10. Looked stedfastly—Following him with their eager eyes, in rapt amazement. Not, however, as a mere fact is this recorded, but as part of that resistless evidence of their senses on which their whole subsequent testimony was to be borne.—*J. F. B.* **Two men stood by them**—That these were unquestionably angels appears from the following three facts: the suddenness of their appearance, for no one had seen

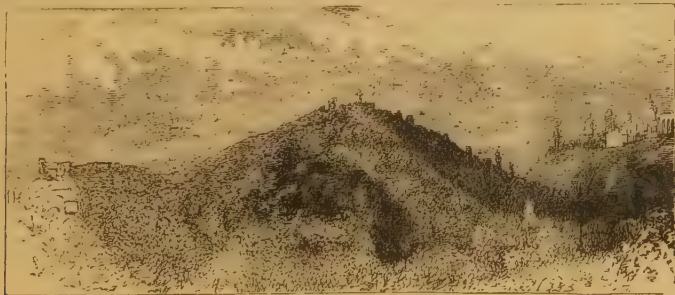
Revised Version.

while they were looking stedfastly into heaven as he went, behold, two men stood by them in white apparel;

11 which also said, Ye men of Gal'ilee, why stand ye looking into heaven? this Jesus, which was received up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye beheld him going into heaven.

brought to the disciples, being a message sent from heaven to the earth.—*Lechler.*

11. Men of Galilee—The apostles were called from that district out of which, in forgetfulness of Jonah, and perhaps, Nahum also, it had been said that there had arisen no prophet. John 7. 52.—*Canon Cook.* **Gazing up** [Rev. Ver., *looking*.]—The question was intended to recall them to themselves, and to remind them that, instead of stupidly and idly gazing after One who was no longer visible, they should rather show their love to him by instantly obeying his farewell commands, and trusting his repeated promise to return, which they accordingly repeat, as if to show their own implicit confidence in its fulfilment.—*J. A. Alexander.* **Shall so come in like manner**—"With the clouds of heaven," (Dan. 7. 13; Matt. 24. 30; 26. 64; Mark 14. 62; Luke 21. 27;) visibly, "every eye shall see him," (Rev. 1. 7;) attended by angels, (Matt. 25. 31; 1 Thess. 4. 16;) and in human form; so that meanwhile we may think of him as retaining "all things appertaining to the perfection of man's nature and may invoke him as Son of David."—*Canon Cook.* **As ye have seen**—Very natural was it for these apos-



Bethany, Mount Olivet, and Jerusalem.

them approach; then, their white shining apparel, a visible representation of celestial purity and holiness; lastly, the tidings which they

bles to infer, what was not said, that they should see him during their own day instead of the day of their resurrection.—*Whedon.*

Authorized Version.

12 Then returned they unto Je-ru'sa-lem from the mount ¹²called Ol'ivet, which is from Je-ru'sa-lem a ¹³sabbath-day's journey.

13 And when they were come in, they went up ¹⁴into an upper room, where abode both Pe'ter, and James, and John, and An'drew, Phil'ip, and Thom'as, Bar-thol'o-mew, and Mat'thew, James the son of Al-phe'us, and ¹⁵Si'mon Ze-lo'tes, and ¹⁶Ju'das the brother of James.

¹²Zech. 14. 4.—¹³John 11. 18.—¹⁴Chap. 9. 37.—¹⁵Luke 6. 15.—¹⁶Jude 1.

That fixed star seems fixed indeed to our eyes; there it has stood in the deep of heaven, and glittered down on the upturned eyes of longing disciples these eighteen hundred years, the bright promise of his coming; but though it seems to stand still, it is moving; it is approaching. Be of good cheer, disciples, your redemption is nearer than when those Galileans first left their nets to follow Jesus.—*Arnot.*

12. Then returned they—They bowed their heads in worship toward the ascending Christ, and returned to Jerusalem with great joy, (Luke 24. 52,) as if they had *gained*, not *lost*, a friend, and as if the ascension were not a *sunset* but a *sunrise*, as indeed it was, not for them alone, but for the whole world.—*A. B. Bruce.* The mount called Olivet—This name is borrowed from the Vulgate, (*Olivet*), and is found in all the English versions, except that of Geneva, which has *Olive Hill*. The Latin word is used by Cicero, and means an olive-yard or orchard. The Greek word occurs only here in the New Testament, but often in the Septuagint version, with a similar form meaning *vineyard*. The name is given here, and sometimes by Josephus, to the high ridge on the east side of Jerusalem, beyond the Kedron, elsewhere called the *Mount of Olives*. It still bears the tree from which it takes its name, but not in such abundance as of old.—*J. A. Alexander.* The place assigned by tradition to the ascension is marked by an ancient church which is supposed to cover the exact spot. A Sabbath day's journey—A little less than a mile, the distance which the scribes had fixed as the limit of a walk outside the city on the Sabbath. The measure is supposed to have been borrowed from the space between the people and the ark when they passed over Jordan, (Josh. 3. 4.)—*J. A. Alexander.* Why does Luke mention that it was a Sabbath day's journey? Perhaps to identify the locality. But Chrysostom thinks because it was Sabbath day; and Alford adds, perhaps

Revised Version.

12 Then returned they unto Je-ru'sa-lem from the mount called Ol'i-vet, which is nigh unto Je-ru'sa-lem, a

13 sabbath day's journey off. And when they were come in, they went up into the upper chamber, where they were abiding; both Pe'ter and John and James and An'drew, Phil'ip and Thom'as, Bar-thol'o-mew and Mat'thew, James the son of Al-phæ'us, and Si'mon the Zeal'ot, and Ju'das

in order to obviate the offense taken at its being a longer walk on that day.—*Whedon.*



Church of the Ascension.

13. An upper room—Not any room above the ground floor, which would be otherwise expressed in Greek; much less a garret or inferior apartment; but a comparatively spacious room reserved both in Greek and Jewish houses for the use of guests or for unusual occasions.—*J. A. Alexander.* It accords



Authorized Version.

14 These all continued with one accord in prayer and supplication, with ¹⁷ the women, and Ma'ry the mother of Je'sus, and with ¹⁸ his brethren.

¹⁷ Luke 23. 49.—¹⁸ Matt. 13. 55.

with ecclesiastical tradition, and seems in itself probable, that it was the same room where the



Interior of Syrian House.

Passover was celebrated, where Matthias was elected, where the pentecostal effusion was bestowed, where the seven deacons were appointed, and where the first council of Jerusalem was held.—*Whedon*. Where abode [Rev. Ver., *The upper chamber where they were abiding*.]—That is, were customarily staying there as their special place of prayer. This no way contradicts Luke 24. 53, which simply asserts that they also constantly frequented the Temple.—

Whedon. Both Peter, like a similar expression in verse 8, means, not only Peter but the others also. This, with his uniform position at the head of the list, marks distinctly his priority, not as a superior in rank and office, but as a representative and spokesman of the rest, like the foreman of a jury or the chairman of a large committee.—*J. A. Alexander*. Peter's denial, Thomas' incredulity, did not exclude them. Although all had forsaken Him they were reinstated in his favor and in the office to which he had called them.—*Canon Cook*. Simon Zelotes [Rev. Ver., *Simon the Zealot*]—Zelotes seems to be the Greek translation, as *Cananites* is the Greek form, of an Aramaic name denoting Zealot. The Greek word for *Canaanite* is altogether different.—*J. A. Alexander*. This is the well's eye, near the summit of the mountain, and the tiny rill that trickled over its brim that day has grown into a mighty river now. Down through the generations the stream has flowed without ceasing; and at this day, although many things impede its progress, the Christian Church is the greatest power in the world.—*W. Arnot*.

Revised Version.

14 *the* ¹⁷son of James. These all with one accord continued stedfastly in prayer, ¹⁸with the women, and Ma'ry the mother of Je'sus, and with his brethren.

¹⁷ Or, brother. See Jude 1.—¹⁸ Or, with certain women.

14. Continued . . . in prayer—There was perseverance in the power of the primitive Church—"they continued." There was unity in those early prayer-meetings—they prayed "with one accord." The prayers were not soon broken off, and were not hindered by disagreements among the suppliants. They ascended straight to heaven in a pillar of pure incense, and descended soon in showers of blessing—a great refreshing from the presence of the Lord.—*Arnot*. [And supplication is omitted in the Rev. Ver.] With the women—Viz., those spoken of by Luke himself, (Luke 8. 2, 3,) where, besides those named, he mentions many others. Some have proposed to render the phrase, "*with their wives*;" but many of these were certainly *not wives of the apostles*; and that those women who were "last at the cross and earliest at the tomb" should not have been assembled with the company now is very improbable.—*Alford*. Their presence is noticed as in strong contrast with Jewish usage, which assigned a separate court in the Temple, and kept women apart in the synagogue. In Christ there is neither male nor female. Gal. 3. 28.—*Canon Cook*. Mary the mother of Jesus—This is her last appearance in the history, a striking comment on the false position which the Church of Rome assigns to her, and from which, if it were well founded, she might be expected to fill much the largest space in all that follows. According to one old tradition, she died early in Jerusalem; according to another, she accompanied John to Ephesus, and lived to an advanced age.—*J. A. Alexander*. His brethren—Probably the sons of Joseph and Mary, one of whom was James, afterward "bishop" of Jerusalem, and writer of the Epistle, and another Jude. Their names are given in Matt. 13. 55.—*H*. It is perfectly clear from this passage that these brothers of Jesus were not the same with the apostles of the same name. The last mention of the "brethren" had shown them as still unbelieving. John 7. 5. Various explanations of their change may be given. (1) They may have been drawn to believe before the Crucifixion by the great miracle of the resurrection of Lazarus. (2) The risen Lord had appeared to James as well as to the apostles, (1 Cor. 15. 7,) and that may have fixed him and the other brothers in steadfast faith. (3) If the mother of

Jesus was with John, the brethren also were likely to come, in greater or less measure, under the influence of their cousin.—*E. H. Plumptre.*

Authorities to be Consulted.

Andrews' Life of our Lord. Farrar's Life of Christ. Geikie's Life of Christ. The Preacher's Lantern, iv, 1, 65. Bonar's Bible Thoughts and Themes, iii, 1, 9, 14, 18. Simeon's *Horæ Homileticæ*. Homiletical Monthly, iii, 449. Ecce Homo, 24. Edmondson's Short Sermons, 411. Chalmers' Sermons, i, 150. Keble's Christian Year. Stems and Twigs, i, 19. Pulpit Analyst, iv, 683. The Church in the House, (W. Arnot.) *On the Apostles*.—Schaff's History of the Apostolic Church, p. 512. Foster's Cyclopedia of Illustrations, (the numbers marked with a star refer to poetical quotations,) ver. 4: *2952, 11233, 12177; ver. 7: 2422; ver. 8: 2054, 2576, 2999, 3007, 4493, 9085; ver. 9: *150, *152, 657, *3125, *3283, 3348; ver. 14: 11496.

Root Thoughts.

The crisis and the consummation. The King goes to his throne; his earthly career of teaching, doing, suffering, and being, is now to receive final and glorious indorsement. He who ascends into the heavens is worthy of this exaltation; worthy because of his career; worthy because of his character.

All that his life, teachings, influence, plans, and promises meant, now take a firm hold on this world by his resurrection; a firm hold on the world eternal by his ascension. He has a right to all power "on earth and in heaven."

Death cannot conquer him; the grave cannot bind him; gravitation cannot hold him; clouds cannot long conceal him; the heaven of heavens cannot contain him. He has gone into history—a divine history on earth; a divine history in heaven.

It is necessary, in order to the perpetuation of the Messianic influence, to prove the fact of the resurrection and of the ascension. Both are proved beyond question or cavil. He lives now all the world over; he lives all the heavens through; he lives all the ages out; he has not let go his hold on men, on society, on the earth. He will all the while be here, and yet he will "in like manner" come again.

It is well that he has gone—for the higher realm gives him wider sweep over the lower, and the uplook into the invisible on the part of his disciples and of his Church through the ages gives them a clearer and keener spiritual vision.

We need the broad outlook and the blessed uplook—after the Departing One and for the Promised One.

The two parts of the Christ History must always be taken together; first the earth part; second the heaven part. The first is the foundation, the second the ever-ascending superstructure. And it must not be forgotten that underneath the earthly foundations rest the eternal pre-existence and almightiness of Christ, who was the "Word with God"—himself God. The foundations of Christ's earthly career are, after all, the Divine being, character, and redemptional purpose.

The theme of Christ, both before and after the passion, was the "Kingdom of God." "For this he came: of this he spake; to this he led his followers' way." No theme so instructive; no theme so mysterious; no theme so vast; no theme so practical to-day as that of the "Kingdom of God," predicted, established, and governed by the risen and ascended Christ.

The departing Christ bade his followers "wait" for the promise of "power,"—not knowledge, but "power;" not even the knowledge of God's purpose, but the power from God's Spirit by which the unknown purpose is fulfilled in and by the obedient.

The picture of the lesson is full of life. The ascending Lord, (1) rising from the sepulcher; (2) rising from the mountain.

We have here, also (1) the proof of the resurrection; (2) the promise of baptism and of the return; (3) the protest of angels against too great absorption in the heavenly treasure while the earthly service waited the preparation of the servants; (4) the prayer in the upper room, united, fervent, persistent.

Practical Thoughts.

[THE WAITING CHURCH.]

1. The waiting Church should recognize its responsibility to complete the work on earth which its Lord began. Ver. 1.

2. The waiting Church should learn and fulfill the commandments of its risen and ascended Lord. Ver. 2.

3. The waiting Church should, like its Master, regard the kingdom of God as its highest object of interest. Ver. 3.

4. The waiting Church should look for, and long for, the fulfillment of the promise of the Holy Ghost. Vers. 4, 5.

5. The waiting Church should seek to do God's work, rather than pry into the mysteries of his government. Vers. 6, 7.

6. The waiting Church should be a living witness to the truth of Christ before all the world. Ver. 8.

7. The waiting Church should look with ex-

pectation, yet with patience, for its Lord's return. Ver. 11.

8: The waiting Church should unite and continue in prayer for the gift of the Spirit. Ver. 14.

A. D. 30.]

LESSON II.

[Jan. 14.

THE DESCENDING SPIRIT.—Acts 2. 1-16.

GOLDEN TEXT.—And they were all filled with the Holy Ghost.—ACTS 2. 4.

TIME.—A. D. 30, ten days after the ascension of Jesus.

PLACE.—Jerusalem.

CONNECTING LINK.—Matthias chosen as one of the apostles. Acts 1. 15-26.

INTRODUCTION.—Next to the incarnation, death, and resurrection of the Son of God, the outpouring of the Holy Ghost and the birth of the Church is the most momentous fact in history. Itself a miracle, it could only enter the world with a retinue of miraculous appearances. Yet it daily reappears on a smaller scale in every individual regeneration; and will thus be perpetually repeated till all humanity shall be transformed into the image of Christ and united with God. For we have here not an isolated and transient occurrence, but the generative beginning of a vast series of workings and manifestations of God in history; the fountain of a river of life, which flows with unbroken current through all time till it merge in eternity.—*Schaff*.

Authorized Version.

1 And when ¹the day of Pentecost was fully come, ²they were all with one accord in one place.

2 And suddenly there came a sound from heaven, as of a rushing mighty wind, and it ³filled all the house where they were sitting.

Revised Version.

2 And when the day of Pen-te'cost ¹was now come, they were all togeth-

2 er in one place. And suddenly there came from heaven a sound as of the rushing of a mighty wind, and it filled all the house where they were

¹ Lev. 23. 15; Deut. 16. 9.—² Chap. 1. 14.—³ Chap. 4. 31.

¹ Gr. was being fulfilled.

1. The day of Pentecost—From the seven weeks interval between it and the passover it was originally called by the Hebrews *the Feast of Weeks*. But later it was called *Pentecost*, from the Greek words signifying *fiftieth*, from the number of intervening days. It marked a second or wheat harvest. That it also commemorated the giving of the law on Mount Sinai is not, indeed, said expressly in the Scriptures, and so is doubted by many biblical scholars; but we join with those who hold it as true: (a) because it was historically a fact that seven weeks did occur from the leaving of Egypt to the giving of the law on Sinai; (b) because some of the most eminent Jewish commentators so held: (c) because the analogy of the other two great feasts requires a historical reference; and (d) because of the striking correspondence, yet contrast, between the giving of the Old Law by Moses, and this giving of the New Law by Christ.—*Whedon*. From the end of Saturday, the sixteenth day of Nisan, forty-nine days are counted; and the fiftieth, or Feast of Pentecost, falls on Sunday. It was the ancient belief of the ancient Christian

Church that the pentecostal day was Sunday.—*Wordsworth*. Was fully come—[*Was being fulfilled*, Rev. Ver., margin.]—As, according to Jewish reckoning, the day began at the previous sunset, it points to an early hour of the fiftieth day.—*Canon Cook*. With one accord [This clause is omitted in Rev. Ver.]—They had prayed more together of late than usual, (chap. 1. 14,) and that made them love one another better. By his grace he thus prepared them for the gift of the Holy Ghost, for that blessed dove comes not where there is noise and clamor, but moves upon the face of the still waters, not the rugged ones.—*M. Henry*.

2. Suddenly—Even after the ten days' prayer the mighty gift came unexpectedly to them, yet at the moment, doubtless wisely chosen by the Spirit, when their *one accord* with each other and with himself was most perfect.—*Whedon*. As of the rushing mighty wind—[Rev. Ver., *As of the rushing of a mighty wind*.]—No gale sweeping over the city struck the sides of the house. But "from heaven," directly downward, fell "a sound," without shape or step, or

Authorized Version.

3 And there appeared unto them cloven tongues, like as of fire, and it sat upon each of them.

4 And they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance.

* Chap. 1. 5.—* Mark 16. 17; 1 Cor. 12. 10; 13. 1; 14. 2.

movement to account for it—a sound as if a mighty wind were rushing, not along the ground, but straight from on high, like showers in a dead calm.—*W. Arthur.* It filled—It refers to the sound—the whole house was filled by the divine reverberation.—*Whedon.* All the house—The form of expression is far more natural in reference to a private dwelling or a hired lodging than to the Temple or any of its appurtenances. The supposed difficulty as to its capacity assumes that a private house could not be a large one, and it is further removed by the obvious assumption that, although the commotion began in the house, the crowd may have assembled in the open air.—*J. A. Alexander.*

The Holy Ghost has the nature of *wind*: (1) In his secret coming; (2) in his powerful shaking; (3) in his purifying blowing; (4) in his soft refreshing. Of *fire* in (1) his bright shining; (2) his genial warming; (3) his destructive burning; (4) his rapid spreading.—*Lechler.*

3. There appeared—The appearance was not a momentary flash; the influence which it symbolized was to be permanent.—*Canon Cook.* Cloven tongues [*Tongues parting asunder, like as of fire.* Rev. Ver.]—The tongues appeared, then settled one upon the head of each person; each tongue being *cloven*, that is, undivided at the root, but flaring into several points at the extremity. By this terminal division was beautifully symbolized the variety of dialect spoken by each tongue.—*Whedon.* Like as of fire—Or, more exactly, as if of fire, i. e., the appearance of these tongues was the same as if they had been really composed of fire, but without forbidding the conclusion that they were so.—*Alexander.* It sat—What sat? Not the tongues, for that is plural; but plainly the quasi-fire, just mentioned, in the tongue shape. What Luke means to say is, that the Spirit itself sat upon each head and gave them utterance. The fire sat upon their heads; and, as if it burned down into the depths of their souls, they were filled with the Holy Ghost.—*Whedon.* On each of them—It sat on them, a sign that this power should abide with them always, and accompany them every-where, though this visible flame vanished.—*Bishop*

Revised Version.

3 sitting. And there appeared unto them tongues ²parting asunder, like as of fire; and it sat upon each one of them. And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit, and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance.

² Or, parting among them. Or, distributing themselves.

Patrick. Rabbinic writers show that it was a common belief of the Jews that an appearance like fire often encircled the heads of distinguished teachers of the law. God has often been pleased to reveal himself to men in conformity with their own conceptions as to the mode in which it is natural to respect communications from him, as by a star to magians.—*Hackett.*

He came in a sound, to awake them; in wind, to move them; in fire, to enlighten and warm them; in tongues, to make them speak.—*Farindon.*

4. And they were all filled—The evangelist would not have said *all*, the apostles being there, had not the rest also been partakers.—*Chrysostom.* With the Holy Ghost—To be filled with any thing is a phrase denoting that all the faculties are pervaded by it, engaged in it, or under its influence.—*Barnes.* Began to speak with other tongues—There can be no question, in any unprejudiced mind, that the fact which this narrative sets before us is, that the disciples began to speak in various languages, namely, the languages of the nations below enumerated, and perhaps others. All attempts to evade this are connected with some forcing of the text, or some far-fetched and indefensible explanation. It would seem that here, as on other occasions, (1 Cor. 14. 22,) tongues were for a sign, not to those that believe, but to those that believe not. I believe, therefore, the event related in our text to have been a sudden and powerful inspiration of the Holy Spirit, by which the disciples uttered, not of their own minds, but as mouthpieces of the Spirit, the praises of God in various languages hitherto, and possibly at the time itself, unknown to them.—*Alford.* The gift of tongues at Pentecost was unique in its nature. Its purpose was not to enable the disciples to address the foreign Jews in their own languages, for there is no mention that they discoursed in them, but merely that they declared the wonderful works of God. It was rather designed to call attention; to excite the spirit of inquiry among the multitude; to arouse their curiosity. It also gave authority to the disciples; it in-

Authorized Version.

5 And there were dwelling 'at Je-ru'-sa-lem Jews, devout men, out of every nation under heaven.

6 Now *when this was noised abroad, the multitude came together, and were ^bconfounded, because that every man heard them speak in his own language.

7 And they were all amazed, and marvelled, saying one to another, Behold, are not all these which speak Gal-i-le'ans?

8 And how hear we every man in our own tongue, wherein we were born?

^c Exod. 23. 17.—^a When this voice was made.—^b Or, troubled in mind.

vested the doctrines which they declared with all the weight of inspiration. It was, so to speak, the bell which called the people to worship, and the credentials which God himself gave to his messengers.—*P. J. Gloag.* Spirit gave them utterance—Their utterances were thus not under their own control, but under the control of the Holy Spirit. They were inspired, in the strictest sense of the term.—*P. J. Gloag.*

5. Dwelling at Jerusalem—Some were Jews who had come from foreign lands, as Jews have ever done, to end their days at Jerusalem; others were the transient sojourners at the feast of Pentecost. Devout men—Not in reference to their having come up to the feast, nor to their dwelling from religious motives at Jerusalem, but stated as imparting a character and interest to what follows. They were not merely vain and curious listeners, but men of piety and weight.—*Alford.* The meaning of the word is worth noting. Its primary sense was one of cautious reverence, the temper that handles sacred things devoutly.—*E. H. Plumptre.* Out of every nation—In Christ's time one might have spoken with truth of the omnipresent Jew. The Jews had made themselves homes in every country, from the Tiber to the Euphrates, from the pines of the Caucasus to the spice-groves of happy Arabia.—*S. Merrill.*

6. This was noised abroad [Rev. Ver., *When this sound was heard.*—The noise of the rushing mighty wind was heard over all the neighborhood, probably all Jerusalem.—*Alford.* In his own language—See note on verse 4. The multitude came together—It was inevitable that the awful sound should arrest the astonished attention, first of one, then of more, lastly, of a multitude of the inhabitants and passers-by. The age, an age which was in keen expectation of some divine event; the day, the great anniversary of Pentecost and of Sinai;

Revised Version.

5 Now there were dwelling at Je-ru'-sa-lem Jews, devout men, from every

6 nation under heaven. And when this sound was heard, the multitude came together, and were confounded, be-

7 cause that every man heard them speaking in his own language. And they were all amazed and marvelled,

saying, Behold, are not all these which 8 speak Gal-i-le'ans? And how hear we, every man in our own language,

9 wherein we were born? Par'thi-ans

the hour, when people were already beginning to throng the streets on their way to the Temple service would all tend to swell the numbers and intensify the feelings of the crowd.—*Farrar.* Were confounded—Perplexed, bewildered, because there was no appearance of a storm to account for the sound. They were startled, but not predisposed to receive the apostolic teaching.—*Canon Cook.*

7. Amazed and marveled—The first verb means properly "To be out of one's normal condition," and when applied to the intellect to be beside one's self with any strong emotion. It is the root of our word *ecstasy*, applied in English usage to extreme degrees of joy, whereas the Greek noun is appropriated in the same way to extreme degree of wonder. As if he had said they were beside themselves with wonder.—*J. A. Alexander.* Are not all these . . . Gal-ileans—Natives of a despised district (John 7. 52) where education was scanty, the standard of culture very low, and the spoken dialect peculiar, (Mark 14. 70,) in consequence of being largely corrupted through intercourse with foreigners. Matt. 4. 15.—*Canon Cook.* Some have inferred from this expression, that all the followers of Christ were Galileans; others that only the apostles are referred to. But the language is sufficiently explained by the large proportion of disciples from that province, and by the prominence of the apostles.—*J. A. Alexander.*

8. How hear we every man—That a great number of fishermen and other illiterate persons should, all on a sudden, become linguists, and in an hour's time be able to speak intelligibly to a great number and variety of nations in their respective languages, "was an ability which, in those circumstances of place, time, and persons wherein it was exercised, may justly be concluded to have been supernatural or miraculous.

Authorized Version.

9 Par'thi-ans, and Medes, and E'lam-ites, and the dwellers in Mes-o-po-ta'mi-a, and in Ju-de'a,¹ and Cap-pa-do'ci-a, in Pon'tus, and A'si-a.

10 Phryg'i-a, and Pam-phy'l'i-a, in E'gypt, and in the parts of Lib'ya about Cy-re'ne, and strangers of Rome, Jews and *proselytes.

¹ 1 Peter 1. 1.—² Exod. 12. 48, Isa. 56. 6.

—*R. Boyle.* Our own tongue, wherein we were born—The Jews who dwelt in foreign countries had, to a great extent, lost their acquaintance with their native language, and then, as now, spoke the language or dialect of the countries in which they dwelt; even the foreign Jews who had taken up their residence in Jerusalem retained their foreign languages, and had separate synagogues where these languages were used.—*P. J. Gloag.* The making all languages intelligible at the giving of the New Law symbolized the bringing of the whole human race within the circle of the Church.—*Canon Cook.*

9. Parthians, etc.—The sentence is continued from the foregoing verse. The long list of names which follows is a specification of the pronoun *we* in verse 8, "We who are Parthians," etc. As we have here recorded, not the very words of any individual speaker, but the sum and substance of what all said, we may suppose each man to have mentioned his own country, or one man to have mentioned several, without detracting in the least from the fidelity and fullness of the record.—*J. A. Alexander.* Parthians are placed first, because of the great extent of their territory, from India to the Tigris, and from the desert of Khiva to the Southern Ocean.—*Canon Cook.* Medes—Media, west of Parthia and Hyrcania, south of the Caspian Sea, east of Armenia, north of Persia. Elamites—In pure Greek, *Elymeans*, inhabitants of Elam or Elymais, a Semitic people, (Gen. 10. 22.) Elam is mentioned in connection with Babylon, Gen. 14. 1; with Media, Isa. 21. 2; Jer. 25. 25; with, or as part of, Assyria, Ezek. 32. 24; Isa. 22. 6; as a province of Persia, Ezra 4. 9; as the province in which Susan was situated, Dan. 8. 2. Mesopotamia—The well-known district between the Euphrates and Tigris, so called merely as distinguishing its geographical position, between the rivers, (so the word imports in Greek;) it never formed a state.—*Alford.* In Judæa—Why, in this catalogue of countries whose natives wondered to hear their dialects here spoken, Judæa should be enumerated, is an unsettled question among commentators. The manuscripts

Revised Version.

and Medes and E'lam-ites, and the dwellers in Mes-o-po-ta'mi-a, in Ju-dæ'a and Cap-pa-do'cia, in Pon'tus

10 and A'si-a, in Phryg'i-a and Pam-phy'l'i-a, in E'gypt and the parts of Lib'ya about Cy-re'ne, and sojourners from Rome, both Jews and pros-

admit no doubt of the true reading. The opinion of Alford, that it is named because it lay in Luke's route westward; of Olshausen, because Luke speaks from his stand-point at Rome; of Bengel, Meyer, and others, because the dialect of Galilee was different from Judæa, are all rejected by Dr. Gloag, who agrees with Hackett, that it was because Luke would enumerate *all the dialects spoken*.—*Whedon.* Cappadocia—At this time a Roman province, embracing Cappadocia proper and Armenia Minor. Pontus—The former kingdom of Mithridates, lying along the southern coast of the Euxine, (whence its name, from the Pontus Euxinus, the Euxine Sea,) from the River Halys to Colchis and Armenia, and separated by mountains from Cappadocia on the south.—*Alford.* Asia—Not Asia Minor, but the Roman province divided from it, "much as Portugal is from Spain." All the Seven Churches addressed in Rev. 2. 3 were within the limits of this proconsular Asia, of which Ephesus was the capital.—*Canon Cook.*

10. Phrygia—It was at this time part of the Roman province of Asia. Pamphylia—A small district, extending along the coast from Olbia, or Phaselis, to Ptolemais. It was a separate tributary district: we find it at one time classed with Galatia, and ruled by the same person.—*Alford.* Egypt—Having enumerated the principal districts of Asia Minor, the catalogue passes (see above on the arrangement, ver. 9) to Egypt, a well-known habitation of Jews. Two fifths of the population of Alexandria consisted of them, and they had an Ethnarch, or governor, of their own.—*Alford.* The parts of Libya about Cyrene—By this expression is probably meant Pentapolis, where Josephus, quoting from Strabo, testifies to the existence of very many Jews—amounting in Cyrene to a fourth part of the whole population. The Cyrenian Jews were so numerous in Jerusalem, that they had a special synagogue, (see chap. 6. 9.) Several were Christian converts. See chap. 11. 20; 13. 1.—*Alford.* Strangers of Rome—*Roman sojourners*, (so literally.) The Roman Jews dwelling (or then being) in Jerusalem.—*Alford.* Proselytes—

Authorized Version.

11 Cretes and A-ra'bi-ans, we do hear them speak in our tongues the wonderful works of God.

12 And they were all amazed, and were in doubt, saying one to another, What meaneth this?

13 Others ^omocking said, These men are full of new wine.

14 But Pe'ter, standing up with the eleven, lifted up his voice, and said

¶ 1 (or. 2. 14.

The proselytes were for the most part willing adherents to the Jewish faith. In most of the great cities of the empire there were men who had been rescued from idolatry and its attendant debasements, and brought under the power of a higher moral law. The converts who were thus attracted joined, with varying strictness, in the worship of the Jews. They were present in their synagogues; they came up as pilgrims to the great feasts at Jerusalem.—*W. Smith.*

11. Cretes—Crete represented the "Isles" spoken of by the Prophets, *e. g.*, Isa. 51. 5. In Crete there were many Jews. **Arabians**—A large, vague term, pointing to the descendants of Ishmael. The grouping them with Cretes must be considered arbitrary, without any reference to geography.—*Canon Cook.* **In our tongues**—Although many of these nations spoke the same language, yet each doubtless had its own dialect, and it is especially of dialects that Luke speaks.—*P. J. Gloag.* **The wonderful works of God** [*The mighty works of God.* Rev. Ver.] The disciples praised God in these different languages; thus offering to him, on this the birthday of the new creation, the homage of all nations, the hallelujah of the human race.—*P. G. Gloag.*

These were the seed-vessels charged with precious seed at Jerusalem, and then thrown back on the several countries whence they had come. In this way the Gospel was, in a single season, brought to regions which otherwise it might not have reached in a century.—*W. Arnot.*

12, 13. **They were all amazed**—From this extended and minute description, it is clear that the historian considered it important for his purpose that the reader should be strongly impressed with the helpless confusion and extreme astonishment of these beholders.—*J. A. Alexander.* **What meaneth this?**—What is the design? What will be the consequence? Something very extraordinary was surely to be expected. The timid apprehended danger from the violent

Revised Version.

11 elytes, Cre'tans and Ar-a'bi-ans, we do hear them speaking in our tongues

12 the mighty works of God. And they were all amazed, and were perplexed, saying one to another, What meaneth this?

13 But others mocking said, They are filled with new wine.

14 But Peter, standing up with the eleven, lifted up his voice, and spake forth unto them, *saying*, Ye men of

excitement; the bolder ridiculed it.—*Canon Cook.*

Others mocking—But there was another quite different set, who have had their like in all generations—of worldly, irreligious *mockers*. The former class are said to be *all*; that is, all the devout foreign residents in Jerusalem; while these *others* are more likely to be Palestinian Jews, either profane in character or bigoted Judaists, and so hostile to Christianity. Out of sympathy, they were perhaps unsusceptible of receiving the supernatural impression.—*Whedon.* **These men are full**—Not that they were so absurd as to think that wine in the head would enable men to speak languages which they never learned; but these, being native Jews, knew not, as the others did, that these were really the languages of other nations, and therefore took what they said to be gibberish and nonsense, such as drunkards, those *fools in Israel*, sometimes talk.—*M. Henry.* **New wine**—*New wine* might be more exactly rendered *sweet wine*, as the Greek word properly denotes sweetness, and although sometimes applied, in classic Greek, to the fresh grape-juice before fermentation, is also used of those fermented wines in which the sweetness was retained by a peculiar process, and some of which were unusually strong. The very phrase, *drunk with sweet wine*, is employed by Athenæus. The same Greek word is used in the Septuagint version of Job 32. 19, to represent the common Hebrew term for wine, in a connection where the reference to fermentation is not only certain, but essential to the meaning. But, apart from these authorities, the reference to new wine, in the sense of unfermented must or grape-juice, would be here a gross absurdity. The very nature of the case, as well as Peter's answer, shows the charge to have been not merely that of drinking, but of being drunk.—*J. A. Alexander.*

14. **Peter standing up**—The apostles spoke in the name of the Church; Peter in the name of the apostles. Chrysostom calls him the mouth

Authorized Version.

unto them, Ye men of Ju-de'a, and all ye that dwell at Je-ru'sa-lem, be this known unto you, and hearken to my words:

15 For these are not drunken, as ye suppose, seeing it is *but* the third hour of the day.

16 But this is that which was spoken by the prophet Joel.

Revised Version.

Ju-dæ'a, and all ye that dwell at Je-ru'sa-lem, be this known unto you,

15 and give ear unto my words. For these are not drunken, as ye suppose; seeing it is *but* the third hour of the day; but this is that which hath been spoken ²by the prophet Joel.

² Or, through.

of the apostles. Some, if not all of the Eleven taught as well as Peter in the course of the day. Ver. 37.—*Canon Cook.* With the eleven, naturally, though not necessarily, implies that the Eleven stood up with him. It may, indeed, mean only that they kept together as one body; but in either case the idea of unity and concert is essential. They not only were, but were seen to be, governed by one purpose, acting under one commission. It was important that Peter should be recognized as not speaking in his own name, but as representing the whole body, which was itself the representative of Christ, in the organization and administration of his Church or kingdom.—*J. A. Alexander.* Said unto them—The verb “said” is, in the original, not the word commonly so rendered, but that which is translated “utterance,” or “to utter,” in ver. 4. The unusual word was probably repeated here to indicate that what follows was just as much an “utterance” of the Holy Spirit, working on and through the spiritual powers of man, as the marvel of the “tongues” had been.—*E. H. Plumptre.* Ye men of Judea—Of course, during the pentecost the men of Judea were gathered to the capital. We have, indeed, present several classes of persons more or less mingling. Palestinian Jews, foreign Jews, devout residents, and mockers.—*Whedon.* Hearken to my words—St. Luke gives us here the first sample of the preaching of the Gospel by the apostles, with which the foundation of Christian preaching, as well as of the Church itself, appears to be closely connected. We discover already, in this first sermon, all the peculiarities of apostolic preaching. It contains no reflections nor deductions concerning the doctrine of Christ, no proposition of new and unknown doctrines, but simply and entirely consists of the proclamation of *historical facts*. The apostles appear here as the witnesses of that which they had seen: the resurrection of Jesus forming the central point of their testimony. It is true that, in the after development of the Church, it was impossible to confine preaching to this his-

torical announcement only; it gradually became invested with the additional office of building up believers in knowledge. But nevertheless the simple testimony to the great works of God, as Peter here delivers it, should never be wanting in preaching to those whose hearts are not yet penetrated by the Word of Truth.—*Olshausen.*

15. These men are not drunken—He does not undertake a formal refutation of so frivolous an accusation, which may not have been seriously intended, even by its authors; but merely makes use of it in a single sentence as an introduction or transition to the true solution of this wonderful phenomenon contained in the next sentence. This view of the connection may be rendered clear by paraphrase as follows: “Passing by the charge of drunkenness as too absurd to be repelled except by simply reminding you how early in the morning it still is, I now proceed to tell you the true meaning of the strange things which you have just seen and heard.”—*J. A. Alexander.* The third hour—From sunrise. The earliest of the hours of prayer, at which the morning sacrifice was offered, midway between sunrise and noon. At their great festivals the Jews abstained from food not only till this hour, as on ordinary days, but till midday.—*Canon Cook.*

16. This is that . . . spoken—Peter is now not only an expounder of prophecy, but an empowered and inspired prophet. His comment, and even his variations, are of an equal authority with the original text.—*Whedon.* The prophet Joel—Joel, about 800 B. C., is, with the exception of Jonah, the earliest of the prophets whose writings have been preserved for us.—*Canon Cook.*—In the discourse which follows Peter declares what they beheld to be the very effusion of the Spirit promised by the prophet Joel (15-18) as a part and token of a great revolutionary change (19, 20) which would be ruinous to all who did not trust in the appointed Saviour, (21,) whom he shows to be no other than the man whom they had crucified but God had

raised, (22-24,) as David had predicted in the Sixteenth Psalm (25-28) in terms which could not be applied to David himself, (29,) but must refer to the Messiah, (30, 31,) and had been fulfilled in Jesus, (32,) who was really the author of the present miracle, (33,) being now exalted, according to another prophecy of David, (34, 35,) which was also inapplicable to himself, and had only been fulfilled in Jesus, whom he therefore concludes to be the true Messiah, (36.)—*J. A. Alexander.*

Swiftly and straight each tongue of flame,
Through cloud and breeze, unwavering came,
And darted to its place of rest
On some meek brow of Jesus blest.
Nor fades it yet that living gleam;
And still those lambent lightnings stream;
Where'er the Lord is, there are they;
In every heart that gives him room
They light his altar every day,
Zeal to inflame and vice consume.

—*John Keble.*

Authorities to be Consulted.

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Root Thoughts.

The human conditions are secured. The facts of the marvelous and recent history are fresh in mind, and as fresh are the words of a recent promise. With these facts and words are associated a person—human, divine, an equal, a superior, an intimate friend, loving and beloved with the deepest, tenderest love.

All the strongest natural forces of the soul are now quickened into eager life—memory, affection, sorrow, a sense of bereavement and of loneliness, hope, with a tinge of uncertainty and

wonder. Beyond are infinite perspectives, mighty resolve, eager desire, an end to be sought the life long, but that end out of sight, its nature too mysterious, its proportions too vast, its extent too far-reaching to be clearly apprehended.

And with all these natural energies quickened by supernatural revelations, there is a consciousness of great need, of divine provision, and of intense expectancy; a somewhat or a some One is to come. They know not just when or how, but whatever or whoever it is, that which is to come is to be a substitute for the Absent One, a means by which he shall continue to be a present One; a force by which they shall still be united in Him, and with Him, and prepared to take His place, and do His work in the world, and by which, above all else, they shall be the more ready for His coming again, and shall make others ready also.

Every thing in the old prophecies that made men look forward are now turning their faces and hearts upward. The old Hebrew records, long dead, are alive now. Out of all the pages of history, poetry, and prophecy, in the Old Scripture, as they unrolled the parchment, gleams the face of One in whom every thought centered. They wondered what he was and what he promised.

Ears, eyes, souls, tongues—all waited. When, all at once, the "Star" looked for shone out; the King expected came; the "Breath" promised breathed upon them; the heavens were again "opened."

There was a work wrought (1) for the ear; (2) for the eye; (3) for the soul; (4) for the tongue; (5) for the people. But the work wrought, which made men wonder for the time, had its higher and more permanent result in the Word itself which moved eyes, ears, souls, tongues, multitudes—words of the everlasting Gospel of the risen and ascended Lord.

Practical Thoughts.

[THE BAPTIZED CHURCH.]

1. The baptism of the Holy Ghost comes when the time is ripe, and all the world is ready, on God's appointed day. Ver. 1.

2. The baptism of the Holy Ghost comes when disciples are of one heart and purpose—united in prayer. Ver. 1.

3. It comes from heaven, as the gift of God to earth. Ver. 2.

4. It comes as a wind, God's Spirit breathed upon men. Ver. 2.

5. It comes as a fire, to kindle, to consume, to purify, to spread. Ver. 3.

6. It comes as a tongue to give the utterance of a new language, the language of Canaan, God's new people in the world. Ver. 4.

7. It comes as a sound heard by men of all na-

tions, representatives of the elect people of earth listening to the Gospel. Vers. 5, 6.

8. It comes as the fulfillment of God's word through the prophets of old. Ver. 16.

A. D. 30.]

LESSON III.

[Jan. 21.

THE BELIEVING PEOPLE.—Acts 2. 37-47.

GOLDEN TEXT.—Then they that gladly received the word were baptized.—ACTS 2. 41.

TIME.—A. D. 30, on the Day of Pentecost.

PLACE.—Jerusalem.

CONNECTING LINKS.—Peter's sermon. Acts 2. 16-36. [See note at the close of the last lesson.]

INTRODUCTION.—Peter has proved to them, according to the clear statements of their own Scriptures, that Jesus was their long-looked-for Messiah; that they had rejected and slain him; but that he had risen, ascended, and from the throne of heaven had sent forth the Holy Ghost to teach, to convince, and to quicken. And the proof of the Spirit's convincing power we behold in this his first work upon multitudes of the guiltiest among the then living—of those to whom pertained the guilt of crucifying their own Messiah.—*J. G. Butler.*

Authorized Version.

37 Now when they heard *this*, they ¹were pricked in their heart, and said unto Pe'ter and to the rest of the apostles, Men *and* brethren, what shall we do?

38 Then Pe'ter said unto them, Repent, ²and be baptized every one of you

Revised Version.

37 Now when they heard *this*, they were pricked in their heart, and said unto Pe'ter and the rest of the apostles, Brethren, what shall we do?

38. And Pe'ter *said* unto them, Repent ye, and be baptized every one of you

¹ Zech. 12. 10; Luke 3. 10; Chap. 9. 6; Acts 16. 30.—² Matt. 3. 2, 8; Luke 24. 47; Chap. 3. 19; 17. 30; 26. 20; 2 Cor. 7. 10.

37. When they heard this—[Peter's sermon, vers. 16-35. See note at the end of the last lesson.] Luke doth now declare the fruit of the sermon, to the end we may know that the power of the Holy Ghost was not only showed forth in the diversity of tongues, but also in the hearts of those who heard.—*Calvin.* Pricked in their heart—Remorse for their sin, and terror at its consequences from the triumphant Christ on high, are their struggling emotions. Even these devout Jews (verse 5) discover that the prophecies of the Testament, and all the forces of the old dispensation, are against them; that the great Messiah has truly come; but that instead of being his friends they are the foes beneath his feet.—*Whedon.* Unto Peter and to the rest of the apostles—Their putting this question to the other (or remaining) apostles does not imply that these had also spoken, but only that Peter was considered the spokesman of them all, and that they concurred in what he said, as well as that the Twelve were still together and collectively accessible. It may also show the eagerness with

which the awakened hearers crowded round these witnesses of the Messiah.—*J. A. Alexander.* Men and brethren—No longer "Galileans," no longer "full of new wine," but brethren. What a change was this in their feelings toward these disciples! True conviction of sin works such a change.—*Jacobus.* What shall we do—It implies: (1) A sense of ignorance and dependence; (2) an earnest, anxious desire to know the right way; (3) a willingness to do whatever is necessary, (Acts 9. 6); (4) a readiness to acknowledge Jesus as raised up, exalted, and empowered to dispense the Holy Ghost.—*Jacobus.*

38. Peter said, Repent—Literally, *change your minds*, namely, from your guilty hostility to Christ to a full faith in his name. In its full Christian sense *repentance* includes a perfect and saving faith in Christ.—*Whedon.* The nature and effects of repentance were doubtless explained by Peter, of whose discourse no more than the general drift is given.—*Canon Cook.* Be baptized—Baptism is the external act and

Authorized Version.

in the name of Je'sus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost.

39 For the ^spromise is unto you, and ^to your children, and ^to all that are afar off, *even as many as the Lord our God shall call.*

³ Rom. 9. 8. — ⁴ Joel 2. 28. — ⁵ Eph. 2. 13.

manifestation of an internal, justifying faith already existing. As the outward act and manifestation of the conditional faith, baptism is mentioned before that *remission* which follows the internal faith, although the instant divine act of remission has actually preceded the baptism. Internal faith precedes the divine *act of remission*; while the external baptismal act of faith is the organic condition to the normal state of remission. — *Whedon.* In the name of Jesus Christ—From regarding him as an impostor, a false Christ, they were now to believe on him as the true Messiah, and to submit themselves to him as their Lord and King. With this change in their views, there would be a corresponding change in their feelings. — *P. J. Gloag.* For the remission of sins—As the only condition upon which their sins could be remitted or forgiven: that is, by accepting Jesus as their Messiah and Saviour, and giving themselves up to his service. On these terms their guilt would be removed and they would enjoy the divine favor. [The Revised Version has “unto the remission.”] In turning from sin we repent; in turning to Christ we believe. When we look at our sins we are filled with grief on account of them; when we look to Christ we trust in him for forgiveness of them. We are not forgiven through the ordinance of baptism, but through Christ in whose name we are baptized, as an expression of our faith in him. — *W. Ormiston.*

Receive the gift of the Holy Ghost—This assurance may be understood both as a promise of his ordinary sanctifying agency, to be experienced by all believers, now and forever, and also as a promise of extraordinary temporary gifts, to answer a specific end on this occasion. — *J. A. Alexander.* It is possible to trace the essential Christian verities back into this solitary article of the Church's creed. In it lay undeveloped whatever is most precious in the confessions of Christendom. It implied to Jewish hearers, and on Jewish lips, all that Old Testament revelation had led men to expect the Christ either to be or to do. Whatever lay in Israel's Messianic hope, of a suffering Victim bearing sin; of an expiating

Revised Version.

in the name of Je'sus Christ unto the remission of your sins; and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost.

39 For to you is the promise, and to your children, and to all that are afar off, *even as many as the Lord our God shall call unto him.* And with

Priest more effectual than Aaron; of a diviner legislator than Moses; of a Ruler more just and noble than David, more splendid and peaceful than Solomon; nay, of One who was the eternal wisdom of the Godhead, the Fellow of Jehovah; before whom divine, not civil, homage must be paid, and that not by men only, but by angels. All this is here, at one stroke, swept over to the lowly Son of Mary, Nazareth's carpenter, who was nailed to Pilate's cross. — *J. O. Dykes.*

39. The promise—The promise of remission of sins and the gift of the Holy Ghost. The law was all precept, the gospel all *promise*, for its precepts are *inclosed* in its promise. — *Bishop Medley.* **Unto you**—Even emphatically, *unto you*, who (verse 36) *have crucified* this Lord. And more abundantly, it dies not with you, but extends to *your children*, your offspring. Nor geographically is it limited to your lineage, but extends afar off; for that promise of salvation to all *that call upon the Lord* (verse 21) shall extend even to all that the Lord by his gospel *shall call*. — *Whedon.* **To your children**—Here used in the sense of *posterity*. Peter wished his hearers to understand that God's promise was not of a transient application to those immediately present, but that it was permanent and all-embracing, inclusive of God's Israel in every age and in all lands. — *H.* **To all that are afar off**—Peter here referred to the Jews dispersed throughout other lands. The promise was for them, as well as for those who were present, and they could go to their homes throughout the provinces named in verses 9-11, and in the world at large, with the message of salvation. The words were as applicable to Gentiles as to Jews, but at that time only his own people were in the mind of the apostle. — *H.* He was aware that the Gentiles were to be brought into the Church, (3. 25,) but he did not understand the conditions of their reception. He believed that they would have to pass through Judaism as a preliminary stage. — *Canon Cook.* **As many as the Lord . . . shall call**—As many as shall hear the call of God through the preaching of the Gospel. The word in the

Authorized Version.

40 And with many other words did he testify and exhort, saying, Save yourselves from this untoward generation.

41 Then they that gladly received his word were baptized: and the same day there were added *unto them* about three thousand souls.

42 And ^othey continued stedfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers.

^o Heb. 10. 25.

original does not mean "to appoint, or to choose," but "to summon," as by the voice of a herald.

40. With many other words—Implying either that the discourse as given in the previous verses is only an outline of the utterance of Peter, or that, in response to the inquiries of the people, it was supplemented by a more complete statement of the gospel. **Testify**—The word means "to bear witness." Peter bore witness to the facts of Jesus' life, atoning death, resurrection, and glorified state, and to the truths of the gospel. **Exhort**—The exhortation followed upon the testimony, as its application, and in its essence, is contained in the next clause. **Save yourselves**—Perform the conditions necessary to being *saved*; saved, that is, with a present salvation from sin and liability to hell.—*Whedon*. Be content to be saved, as Noah and Lot. Frustrate not the gracious purpose of God in providing for your salvation.—*Canon Cook*. **This untoward generation**—[*This crooked generation*, Rev. Ver.] The *crooked generation* is the mass of unbelieving Jews, not considered as a race or nation, which is not the usage of the Greek word, but as a contemporary generation, out of which the penitent are urged to extricate themselves by consenting to be saved.—*J. A. Alexander*. As if Peter already foresaw the hopeless impenitence of the nation at large, and would have his hearers hasten in for themselves and secure their own salvation.—*J. F. B.*

41. Gladly received his word [*Gladly* is omitted in Rev. Ver.]—In order to understand how they received the word "gladly," we must remember that they had been "pricked to the heart." They had been wounded, and now the healing is grateful. A little religion is a painful thing, but more religion takes the pain away. The word is both a hammer to break the rock and a balm to heal the broken heart. Its first effect is to convince a sinner that he is lost, its next to make him rejoice in his Saviour.—*Arnot*.

Revised Version.

many other words he testified, and exhorted them, saying, Save yourselves from this crooked generation.

41 They then ¹that received his word were baptized: and there were added *unto them* in that day about 42 three thousand souls. And they continued stedfastly in the apostles' teaching and ²fellowship, in the breaking of bread and the prayers.

¹ Or, having received.—² Or, in fellowship.

Were baptized—This can hardly have been by immersion, even if the Twelve took part, each of them administering to two hundred and fifty. The supply of water within the walls of Jerusalem was extremely scanty, and access to the reservoirs, most precious to the population of a large city, would not have been allowed to such a multitude.—*Canon Cook*. **The same day**—In the course of it, not all simultaneously.—*Canon Cook*. **Three thousand**—It is obvious that some of these converts may have gone back to the cities whence they came, and may have been the unknown founders of the Church at Damascus, or Alexandria, or Rome itself.—*E. H. Plumptre*.

It is the first conversion that was wrought by the apostles in the Christian Church; the first draught that Peter made after he was fully authorized and sent by Christ to be "a fisher of men;" the first fruits of the Gospel; the first handful of ripe ears of corn offered up to God to sanctify the whole harvest; the goodly bunch of Esheol, gathered by these first spies, the apostles; betokening and assuring the Church's fruitfulness.—*Bishop Brownrigg*.

42. They continued stedfastly—Though the conversion was sudden, the perseverance was steadfast.—*Whedon*. **The apostles' doctrine** [*Teaching*, Rev. Ver.]—The word *doctrine* has now a technical sense, and means a collection and arrangement of abstract views supposed to be contained in the Bible; but in Scripture it means simply teaching or instruction.—*Barnes*. This regular tuition of the new converts must have embraced two sections, first, the fulfilment in Jesus of Old Testament Messianic Scriptures; and, second; the truths which Jesus had himself taught to the Twelve respecting the kingdom of God, both before his death and after his resurrection.—*J. O. Dykes*. **And fellowship**—Literally, *And in community*. The living together as one family, and having things in common. It is no objection to this meaning that the fact is *repeated* below, in verse

Authorized Version.

43 And fear came upon every soul: and many wonders and signs were done by the apostles.

44 And all that believed were together, and had all things common;

* Mark 16. 17.—* Chap. 4. 32.

45; for so is the *breaking of bread* in verse 46, and the continuing in prayers. The meaning given in the A. V., "*in the apostles' fellowship*," is not objectionable in itself, but still, I conceive, bears no meaning defensible in construction.—*Alford*. **Breaking of bread**—Every evening after sundown, at the customary hour for the principal meal of a Jewish household, these brethren appear to have come together to a family table very much as our Lord and the Twelve had done on the memorable night on which he was betrayed. It was the chief token and bond of their unity in their departed but still spiritually present Head and Householder. To make the bond tighter by more formally recalling its basis in his death who sat no longer at the head of the board, they closed their meal by breaking bread as he had done, and had bade them do "in remembrance" of him. By the "breaking of bread," therefore, there were naturally expressed, (1) The continuity of their intercourse with One in whom, though they saw him not, yet believing, they still rejoiced; (2) Their own fraternity as the children of One whom the Son had taught to call "our Father;" and, (3) Their expectation of his speedy return, who had only gone away that he might make the Father's great house above ready for all the family.—*J. O. Dykes*. **In prayers** [*In the prayers*, Rev. Ver.].—Such as appertained to their common worship. A settled and recognized form, combining, we may presume, old familiar Jewish with new Christian devotions. The use of the plural has been thought to indicate fixed times for prayer.—*Canon Cook*.

The Christian is one of a community; alone he is but a limb cut off from the trunk; separately he must draw his vital vigor from the Head, but that vigor must be used and manifested, not in isolation, but in a self-forgetting fellowship. He must never fancy himself the whole body, either in being independent of the Head from which he derives vitality, or in being independent of the organized system in which he exercises but one function of duty.—*C. J. Vaughan*.

43. **Fear came**—While their internal state was such as has been just described, their outward state was one of safety under the

Revised Version.

43 And fear came upon every soul: and many wonders and signs were done by the apostles. And all that believed were together, and had all things common; and they sold their

* Or, through.—* Many ancient authorities add in Jerusalem; and great fear was upon all.

divine protection.—*J. A. Alexander*. **Every soul**—Designating generally the multitude, those who were not joined to the infant Church. This is evident by the words "all that believed," when the Church is again the subject. Ver. 44. They were filled with fear, dread, reverential astonishment, at the effect produced by the outpouring of the Spirit.—*Alford*. **Wonders and signs** are absolute and relative expressions for the same thing, namely, miracles. The first word, both in Greek and English, represents them as they are in themselves, portents or prodigies. The other indicates their use and purpose, as signs or proofs of something else, the divine existence, will, or presence, the divine legation [appointment] of the apostles, and the truth of their official teachings.—*J. A. Alexander*. The "fear" or awe of the people was maintained by these miracles, of which an example is given in the next chapter.

44. **Were together**—This does not import that all assembled in one place; their numbers had become too large for that, even with due allowance for those who quitted Jerusalem after the festival.—*Canon Cook*. It indicates that the Church life of those early days was of a social and even a family character. The believers were on terms of intimacy together, and found their highest happiness in the gatherings of the Church. **Had all things common**—Common, not by joint ownership, but by freedom of use.—*Whedon*. That this was literally the case with the infant Church at Jerusalem is too plainly asserted in these passages to admit of a doubt. Some have supposed the expressions to indicate merely a partial community of goods, contrary to the express assertion of chap. 4. 32. In order, however, rightly to understand this community, we may remark, *It is only found in the Church at Jerusalem*. No trace of its existence is discoverable anywhere else; on the contrary, St. Paul speaks constantly of the rich and the poor. See 1 Tim. 6. 17; Gal. 2. 10; 2 Cor. 8. 13, 15; 9. 6, 7; 1 Cor. 16. 2; also James 2. 1-5; 4. 13.—*Alford*.

That Christian communism said, "All that is mine is thine;" the unchristian communism of our day says, "All that is thine is mine." That

Authorized Version.

45 And sold their possessions and goods, and ⁹parted them to all *men*, as every man had need.

46 And they, continuing daily with one accord ¹⁰in the temple, and ¹¹breaking bread ^afrom house to house, did eat their meat with gladness and singleness of heart,

⁹ Isa. 58. 7.—¹⁰ Luke 24. 53.—¹¹ Chap. 20. 7.—^a Or, at home.

holy community of goods proceeded from love to the poor; but that which is now proclaimed is the result of a hatred to the rich.—*Gerok*.

45. Sold their possessions—"Possessions" stands for real property, "goods" for personal.

—*E. H. Plumptre*. These verbs, *sold* and *parted*, are in the imperfect tense, indicating that the sale and distribution took place from time to time, as special occasions of distress or want called for them.—*Canon Cook*. **Parted them to all men**—On this special liberality we may note, (1) It partly arose from the non-resident or pilgrim character of a large part of the converts. (2) It was not an obligatory rule; the laws of ownership or property were not disturbed or questioned. Even Ananias might have kept all his lands unblamed. (3) This liberality was local, being confined to Jerusalem, and temporary, not surviving the dispersion of the Church by the Sauline persecution. (4) It was not what Renan calls it—a cenobitical or communistic institute—had no monastic quality, but was a common impartation arising from the exigency of the times and the free spirit of Christian love.—*Whedon*. **As every man had need**—It is no baseless theory which sees, as the result of this community of goods, which existed so generally in the Jerusalem Church, the extreme distress which, as early as the year A. D. 43, prevailed among the Jerusalem Christians. In spite of the most generous exertions of "the brethren" in Rome, in Greece, in Asia Minor, in Syria, this deep poverty seems to have continued to the last (that is, till A. D. 70, when the city was destroyed) in the Mother Church of Christendom.—*H. D. M. Spence*.

46. Daily . . . in the temple—They not only forsook not the old Jewish temple service, but were specially punctual at the morning and evening sacrifices and other services therein, even after the great atonement, following the example of Jesus. To the Jews they thereby still appeared to be true Jews, only with the peculiarity of a special sort of piety, and a belief that the expected Messiah had come in the person of Jesus.—*Whedon*. The apparent

Revised Version.

possessions and goods, and parted them to all, according as any man

46 had need. And day by day, continuing stedfastly with one accord in the temple, and breaking bread at home, they did take their food with gladness and singleness of heart,

strangeness of their being allowed to meet in the temple is explained partly by the fact that its courts were open to all Israelites who did not disturb its peace, partly by the existence of a moderate half-believing party in the Sanhedrim itself, including Nicodemus, Joseph of Arimathea, and Gamaliel, and by the popularity gained for a time by the holiness and liberal almsgiving of the new community.—*E. H. Plumptre*. **Breaking bread from house to house**—This has been understood, by Bishop Kaye and others, of the eucharist. But the sequel of the verse seems to point to ordinary meals and hospitality. It was characteristic of the Jews that they preferred to break their bread, not to cut it.—*Canon Cook*. **Did eat their meat** [*Take their food*. Rev. Ver.]—These ancient Christians were not hermits. They did not deny themselves their necessary food, nor the company of their kind. They did not desert and denounce convivial meetings.—*Arnott*. **Singleness of heart**—The literal meaning of the word translated "singleness," which does not occur elsewhere in the New Testament, was the smoothness of a soil without stones. Thence it came to be used for evenness and simplicity, unity of character; thence for that unity showing itself in love; thence, by a further transition, for unalloyed benevolence, showing itself in act.—*E. H. Plumptre*.

47. Praising God does not seem only to refer to *giving thanks at their partaking of food*, but to their general manner of conversation, including the recurrence of special ejaculations and songs of praise by the influence of the Spirit.—*Alford*. **Having favor**—Their joyfulness made others notice them, and their upright, blameless conduct made all honor them. **To the Church** [This clause is omitted in Rev. Ver.]—This is the first historical use of the word *church* in application to the body of believers after its reorganization. In the gospel of Matthew it is twice applied to the same body by our Lord himself, (Matt. 16. 18; 18. 17,) but in the way of anticipation. The Greek word, which expresses the idea of evoking, calling out, also suggests that of con-

Authorized Version.

47 Praising God, and ¹²having favour with all the people. And the ¹³Lord added to the church daily such as should be saved.

¹² Rom. 14. 18.—¹³ Rom. 8. 30.

voking, calling together, and is therefore most appropriate to the Christian Church as a select organic body, called out by divine choice from the mass of men, and called together by divine authority as a spiritual corporation.—*J. A. Alexander. Such as should be saved* [Rev. Ver., *Those that were being saved*] A prolix and excuseless mistranslation of a Greek participle, signifying *the saved*, or *those being saved*, that is, with a present salvation from sin and guilt. Peter had exhorted them to be *saved*, and they did become *saved*. And so the Lord added daily *the saved* to the Church.—*Whedon.* Men are said to be saved in reference not only to the final consummation but to the inception of the saving work. Of every penitent, believing sinner we may say, with equal truth, that he will certainly be saved, and that he has been saved already.—*J. A. Alexander.*

Daily, ever since men were multiplied on the earth, have the saved streamed through the straight gate into life, and now a multitude whom no man can number inhabit the mansions of the Father's house. He added the saved to the Church; added them in the act of saving, saved in the act of adding. He does not add a withered branch to the vine; but in the act of inserting it makes the withered branch live.—*W. Arnot.*

Authorities to be Consulted.

Schaff's History of the Apostolic Church. Milman's History of Christianity. The Church in the House, (W. Arnot.) Preacher's Lantern, iv, 257, 321. Bonar's Bible Thoughts and Themes. Smith's New Testament History. Foster's Cyclopædia: ver. 37: 5078, 7556, 10844, 11044; ver. 38: 2990, 8855, 10362; ver. 39: 2194, 3255, 9212; ver. 41: 9554, 11658, 11668; ver. 42: 2284, 5077.

Root Thoughts.

Out of God's movements in the moral and spiritual kingdom there must come more than wonder. The miracle-monger may excite surprise, but under the ministry of the Gospel souls forget the marvel of the summons in the keen sense of guilt, the intense longing for grace, the alternations of fear and hope, and the final, fixed, and eternal resolve to seek Christ's servants in order to find Christ, and to surrender all to him

Revised Version.

47 praising God, and having favour with all the people. And the Lord added ⁵to them day by day those that were being saved.

⁵ Gr. together.

—all faith, will, love, power, influence, time, property.

In full consecration Christian faith finds at once its fruit and its test.

Giving all for Christ, the disciple gains all and loses nothing. The jewel of self which he grasped before, and now after a struggle abandons, turns out to be a frost crystal that melts as he opens his cold hand. The heat of heaven dissipates it. The cross of Christ, which he took instead of his abandoned treasure, he finds to be a casket of crown jewels—gladness, peace, joy, fellowship, opportunity to work for Christ, with Christ, and to see results achieved by Christ.

Here is a lovely picture of the early Church that defies the genius of the artist in pencil and color. It is the adumbration of the future, in which steadfastness, unity, charity, faith, thoughtfulness, should combine in the development of gracious character.

Observe here the place of the "apostle's teaching." The communication and exposition of the truth wrought wonders in character. These scenes were not those of human excitement, in which the *furore* over personal experience and emotion, and intense self-obtrusion crowd out of sight Christ and his work. A divine atmosphere filled the place—the atmosphere of thoughtful, unselfish, supernatural, spiritual power.

(1) *Seeking* Christ, they were, (2) *Saved* through Christ, and thus became, (3) *Steadfast* in Christ; and must be, (4) *Successful* for Christ.

Practical Thoughts.

[A TRUE REVIVAL.]

1. It begins in a Church baptized with the Holy Ghost, and bearing living testimony to the gospel. Ver. 37.

2. It is promoted by bold, earnest, faithful preaching of the truth by a saved man. Ver. 37.

3. It is shown by sincere and deep conviction of sin in the hearts of those **who hear** the word. Ver. 37.

4. It is shown by earnest and submissive inquiry after the way of life by those who are willing to enter it. Ver. 37.

5. It demands thorough repentance from sin and separation from sinners by union with the cause of Christ. Vers. 38-40.

6. It is marked by sudden, numerous, and

thorough conversions to the ways of Christ. Ver. 41.

7. It is followed by steadfastness and teachableness in the ways of the Lord. Ver. 42.

8. It is followed by a desire to know and will-

ingness to observe the institutions of the gospel. Ver. 42.

9. It brings joy, unity, and love to the Church, and awe and respect from the world. Vers. 43, 44.

A. D. 30.]

LESSON IV.

[Jan. 28.

THE HEALING POWER.—Acts 3. 1-11.

GOLDEN TEXT.—Then shall the lame man leap as an hart, and the tongue of the dumb sing. —ISA. 35. 6.

TIME.—A. D. 30, soon after the events of the last lesson, none being named between them.

PLACE.—The Temple in Jerusalem.

INTRODUCTION.—A few months probably have passed since the occurrence of the events considered in the last lesson, during which the infant Church, with perfect harmony within, and free from hinderances without, successfully prosecuted its mission, and peacefully added to its numbers. Its labors as yet seem to have been confined to Jerusalem, where the believers lovingly associated together; but this state of things was not designed to last. The calm, clear morning was soon to be clouded. The last chapter gave us an account of Peter's first sermon and its effect. We now proceed to consider his first recorded miracle and its results. It is probable he wrought many others, (Acts 2. 43.)—*W. Ormiston.*

Authorized Version.

1 Now Pe'ter and John went up together into the temple at the hour of prayer, *being* the ninth hour.

2 And a certain man lame from his mother's womb was carried, whom they

Revised Version.

3 Now Pe'ter and John were going up into the temple at the hour of prayer, 2 *being* the ninth hour. And a certain man that was lame from his mother's womb was carried, whom they laid

1. Peter and John—As on the day of Pentecost, so also in the succeeding history down to the appearance of Paul, Peter is the great leader, promoter, and defender of the Church, by word and deed. Behind him walks John, in mysterious silence, betokening a hidden depth of life and great promise for the future.—*Schaff.* They did not precisely correspond to each other in nature and character; but as one diamond polishes another, so each of these precious stones may have aided in imparting additional value to the other.—*Rieger.* Went up together—Everywhere we find these two apostles in great harmony together.—*Chrysostom.* Into the temple—The larger and more common sense of the word "temple" included all the inclosures on the sacred Mount Moriah, within which, a little north-west of the center, the edifice stood. The largest inclosure encompassed the whole, and took in the outer court, or *Court of the Gentiles*, beyond which none but a Jew might go on pain of death. The next inner wall closed in the *Court of the Women*, so called not because exclusively for females, but because no woman,

unless for sacrifice, ever went further. The third inner wall hemmed in the *Court of Israel*; and the fourth the *Court of Priests*, into which no layman (unless Levite) might enter. In this court of the priests was the sacred house with the great altar, on which, twice a day, morning and evening, a lamb was offered, accompanied by the prayers of the people.—*Whedon.* At the hour of prayer—This continued conformity to the Jewish ritual was favorable to the success of apostolic teaching.—*Canon Cook.* Being the ninth hour—At the ninth hour, midway between noon and sunset, the time for the evening sacrifice, when the temple was usually thronged.—*Canon Cook.*

It is for use for private Christians so far to have their hours of prayer as may serve, though not to bind, yet to remind, conscience.—*M. Henry.*

2. A certain man—This lame man is an image of our natural inability. We must be carried as long as our feet are without strength. But he who lays us at the most beautiful gate of the temple which is called Jesus Christ, has, in truth, carried us to the gate of life and of the power

TOWER OF ANTONIA.

PLATFORM OF THE TOWER ANTONIA.

DOUBLE CLOISTER.

COURT OF ANTONIA.

CLOISTER.

COURT OF THE PRIESTS

COURT

OF ISRAEL

LAVEN

GREAT ALTAR

COURT of the WOMEN

SACRED ENCLOSURE

Drain to Kidron.

SOLOMON'S

PORTICO.

VALLEY OF JEHOSEPHAT.

- 1 Room for cement.
- 2 Show bread bakery.
- 3 Guard Room.
- 4 Treasure room.
- 5 Single cloister.
- 6 Golden table.
- 7 Golden incense.
- 8 Golden Candelabrum.
- 9 Stone steps.
- 10 Ascent to altar.
- 11 Gate of Nicodem.
- 12 Apartments for the deposit of sacrificial oil and wine.
- 13 Room for the ceremony of cleansing lepers.
- 14 Gallery of cloister.
- 15 Treasure chests.
- 16 Room for the ceremony of release from a Nazarite vow.
- 17 Chambers for the deposit of wood.
- 18 Beautiful gate.
- 19 Porch.
- 20 Marble tables for fresh show bread.
- 21 Golden table for stale show bread.
- 22 Steps.

Plan of the Temple.

Authorized Version.

laid daily at the gate of the temple which is called Beautiful, to ask alms of them that entered into the temple;

3 Who seeing Pe'ter and John about to go into the temple asked an alms.

4 And Pe'ter, fastening his eyes upon him with John, said, Look on us.

5 And he gave heed unto them, expecting to receive something of them.

¹ John 9. 8.

of God; we shall there be assuredly healed.—*Gossner*. **Lame from his mother's womb**—Proof that none but miraculous power could cure him.—*Whedon*. **Was carried**—Literally, *Was being carried*; not yet deposited in his usual place.—*Canon Cook*. **Laid daily**—At a path where troops of the benevolent are supposed to pass. There are many irreligious humanitarians who pretend that the Christian Church preaches a great deal, but does little in the cause of humanity. Such a statement is false in fact. Statistics would show that the great current of liberal giving flows from Christian, evangelically Christian, hands. It is in Christian countries almost alone that great benevolent institutions have heretofore existed.—*Whedon*. **At the gate**—Some have claimed that no cripple or deformed person was permitted to enter the temple beyond the Court of the Gentiles; and that it was an infraction of the rules when "the blind and the lame came to Jesus in the temple" (Matt. 21. 14) for healing. But this is not certain. **The gate . . . called Beautiful**—No gate of this name is mentioned by any of the ancient authorities. By some it has been supposed to be the gate Nicanor, by others the gate Shushan. The conditions suit better the gate Shushan; as does also the circumstance mentioned (verse 11) that the people ran together to *Solomon's Porch*; for this gate was on the east side of the court of the Gentiles, [leading into the court of the women,] and close to Solomon's Porch. Another suitable circumstance was, that by this gate the market was held for sheep and cattle and other offerings, and therefore a greater crowd would be attracted.—*Alford*. If that of Shushan is to be understood it was eighty-seven feet high, *i. e.*, seventeen feet higher, we are told, than any of the others, and was covered with lilies in high relief. The eastern gate has also been suggested, called the Gate of Nicanor, because his head and right hand were fixed above it by Judas Maccabæus. This, of Corinthian brass, surpassed in splendor the other gates, richly decorated as they were with plates of gold and silver.

Revised Version.

daily at the door of the temple which is called Beautiful, to ask alms of them that entered into the temple;
3 who seeing Pe'ter and John about to go into the temple, asked to receive
4 an alms. And Pe'ter, fastening his eyes upon him, with John, said, Look
5 on us. And he gave heed unto them, expecting to receive something from

It was in the most frequented part of the temple, well suited for the mendicant's purpose.—*Canon Cook*. **Alms**—The word means *mercy, compassion*, and so an act of mercy.—*S. S. Journal*. **Entered into the temple**—Into the women's court, where the public worship at the sacrifices was held.—*Whedon*.

A missionary lady, writing from Damascus to the *Christian Instructor*, gives the following illustration of the continuance of an ancient practice in the East: "A singular and interesting custom prevails here during the hours of public prayers on Sabbath mornings, and on frequent stated sessions during the week. It is that of the poor and diseased, lame and blind, being gathered about the church doors to solicit alms. They present a very strange appearance, sitting together along the walls, or standing in groups with the hand extended for charities, and remind one of the account given in Acts 3. 2 of the laying of the lame man at the 'gate of the temple which is called Beautiful.' The feeble and blind are often led to these public places, and the lame sometimes literally 'carried' on the shoulders of some good Samaritan friend."—*J. C. Gray*.

3, 4. **Asked an alms**—How much more anxious are men for their bodies than for their souls; and how much more ready to ask alms of their fellow-men than salvation of their God.—*Jacobus*. **Fastening his eyes upon him**—Without any interchange of words, Peter knew that he and John were of one mind, agreed to ask for the cure of this cripple, and assured that their prayer would be answered.—*Canon Cook*. **Look on us**—Peter would not have thus spoken without being certain of the design of God, and his words command the man to look for some singular and unusual benefit.—*Calvin*. What the cripple could do he must and did do toward his own healing. He could not move a foot, but he could fix his eye.—*Burkitt*.

When thou seest misery in thy brother's face let him see mercy in thine eye; the more the oil of mercy is poured on him by thy pity, the more the oil in thy cruse shall be increased by thy piety.—*Quarles*.

5. **He gave heed**—No avowal of faith was

Authorized Version.

6 Then Pe'ter said, "Silver and gold have I none; but such as I have give I thee: 'In the name of Je'sus Christ of Naz'a-reth rise up and walk.

7 And he took him by the right hand, and lifted him up; and immediately his feet and ancle bones received strength.

21 Peter 4. 10.—3 Chap. 4. 10.

required in this case, or in that of Æneas at Lystra. But the apostles were enabled to discern the faith of this cripple. Compare 14. 9. He had faith, (verse 16,) was thankful for his cure, (verse 9,) and attached himself to the apostles, (verse 11,) even at his peril. Chap. 4. 14.—*Canon Cook*. Expecting to receive—Because it was a constant custom for all who entered the temple to carry money with them to give to the treasury, or to the poor, or to both.—*A. Clarke*.

With what diligence and attention we listen when we have reason to expect temporal aid.—*Quesnel*.

6. Silver and gold have I none—Peter spoke here of *his own station and means* in life, "I am no rich man, nor have I silver or gold to give thee."—*Alford*. This disclaimer comes very appositely after the account in the last chapter of the general fund for the distribution of alms; it shows that the apostles did not enrich themselves out of that fund, but remained in their former state of poverty.—*J. Ford*. Such as I have give I thee—Here is the display of a most wondrous possession, in comparison of which silver and gold are nothing. Here is a man with whom God has put himself in connection; here is a man who has a whole magazine of heavenly blessing at his disposal, whose resources are beyond all human measure, though wholly unlike all that man values or cares for. The man I speak of is simply a *believing man*. Not a man of learning, or genius, or position, or culture, but simply a believing man. Such was the fisherman of Capernaum. It is the believing man that wields the scepter, that has access to the stores of the kingdom. Not many rich, not many wise, not many noble are called.—*H. Bonar*. In the name of Jesus Christ—They were the boldest words ever uttered within those temple walls. There, but a few weeks previous, Jesus had been pronounced a blasphemer, and now his disciple on the same ground openly proclaims him the Messiah, and, as if determined that nobody should fail to identify him as the crucified One, he adds, *the*

Revised Version.

6 them. But Pe'ter said, Silver and gold have I none; but what I have, that give I thee. In the name of Je'sus Christ of Naz'a-reth, walk.

7 And he took him by the right hand, and raised him up: and immediately his feet and his ankle-bones received

Nazarene.—*S. S. Journal*. The name of Jesus, the person of Jesus, his grace and divine power to heal, constitute, in their combination, a point of union for both parties; here their souls meet together, here the hand of one grasps the hand of the other; and here they find the source of that bodily and spiritual power which they respectively impart and receive. The more intimately they are united with Jesus in faith, love, and cheerful hope, the more freely and fully they receive strength, help, and salvation.—*Lechler*. Rise up and [these words are omitted in the Rev. Ver.] walk—The command, *Arise and walk*, is rendered still more laconic and abrupt by the omission of the first verb in some ancient manuscripts and late editions. *In the name of Jesus Christ, the Nazarene, walk*.—*J. A. Alexander*.

Let not those of us who are poor in this world's goods imagine that we are thereby quite prevented from doing good to others. Behold what a blessing Peter, though he had neither silver nor gold, bestowed on the beggar.—*W. M. Taylor*.

The story is famous of the discourse betwixt Pope Innocent IV. and Thomas Aquinas, when that great scholar came to Rome, and looked somewhat amazedly upon the mass of plate and treasure which he saw there. "So," said the pope, "you see, Thomas, we cannot say as did St. Peter of old, 'Silver and gold have I none.'" "No," said Aquinas, "neither can you command, as he did, the lame man to arise and walk."—*Bishop Hall*.

7. Took him by the right hand—This action showed the cripple that his cure came through the instrumentality of the apostles.—*Canon Cook*. Thus also did Christ. He often cured by a word, often by an act; often also he put forth his hand when the objects were weak in faith, that the healing might not seem to take place of itself.—*Chrysostom*. His feet—Better, *his soles*. The precision with which the process is described is characteristic of the medical historian. Both this term and the "ankle bones" employed are more or less technical, as is also

Authorized Version.

8 And he 'leaping up stood, and walked, and entered with them into the temple, walking, and leaping, and praising God.

9 And ⁵all the people saw him walking and praising God:

10 And they knew that it was he which sat for alms at the Beautiful gate of the temple: and they were filled with wonder and amazement at that which had happened unto him.

11 And as the lame man which was healed held Pe'ter and John, all the people ran together unto them in the

Revised Version.

8 strength. And leaping up, he stood, and began to walk; and he entered with them into the temple, walking,

9 and leaping, and praising God. And all the people saw him walking and

10 praising God: and they took knowledge of him, that it was he which sat for alms at the Beautiful Gate of the temple: and they were filled with wonder and amazement at that which had happened unto him.

11 And as he held Pe'ter and John, all the people ran together unto them

* Isa. 35. 6.—⁵ Chap. 4. 21.

the word rendered "received strength;" literally, *were consolidated*, the flaccid tissues and muscles being rendered firm and vigorous.—*E. H. Plumptre*.

8. *And he leaping up*—*Leaping up* describes his first joyous liberation from his weakness; as soon as he felt himself strengthened he leapt up for joy.—*Alford*. *And walked* [Rev. Ver., *Began to walk*]—The art of walking must usually be learned. It is said of Casper Hauser, who had been confined in a German prison till he was seventeen years old, that he could not walk without stumbling; but this man walked at once. The miracle taught him how to use his limbs. So it was a double miracle.—*S. S. Journal*. *Into the temple*—Through the gate Beautiful into the women's court of worship.—*Whedon*. *Walking and leaping*—The very language seems to exult in a redundant flow of expressive phrases, just as a poor cripple, who never knew either the comfort of bodily vigor or the pleasure of locomotion, may be supposed to do when suddenly and unexpectedly blessed with both. He would exert his new-acquired powers again and again, first in one attitude, then in another; sometimes to try whether he was really healed, and not under the pleasing delusion of a dream; sometimes from a transport of conscious delight, and to express the sallies of joy that sprung up in his heart.—*J. Henry*. *Praising God*—Many persons are restored to health, but all are not thankful for it. John 5. 14.—*Zeisius*.

9, 10. *All the people saw him*—A great multitude. The miracle was wrought in a place of public resort, and at an hour when numbers came together for the evening sacrifice.—*Canon Cook*. *They knew that it was he*—The cure, instantaneous and complete, was by the circum-

stances placed beyond doubt and question. The cripple was lame from his birth, was above forty years old, had been relieved by many, was known to many more, being daily carried to a place of public resort, and all passed among avowed and embittered enemies of the apostles and their teaching.—*Canon Cook*. *Wonder and amazement*—The sight of this man walking in the free use of his limbs, and loudly thanking God for his recovery, excited feelings of the highest wonder, not unmixed with awe, at this indication of God's special presence and activity among them.—*J. A. Alexander*. The great design of the miracle seems to have been to arouse the attention of the multitude, to convert them into inquirers.—*P. J. Gloag*.

11. *The lame man which was healed*—In the Rev. Ver. the word *he* is substituted for this clause. *Held Peter and John*—Luke presupposes that as they went into the temple (verse 8) worship and sacrifice were duly performed, and that they are now returning out. The lame-born during that time *held*, that is, *closely adhered*, or clung, to the apostles, and thereby marked them out to the devout multitude as authors of the deed.—*Whedon*. The lame man was *holding* Peter and John physically; not spoken of mental adhesion, but of actual holding by the hand or arm, that he might not be separated from them in the crowd, but might testify to all *who* his benefactors were.—*Alford*. *The people ran together unto them*—Following the two apostles and the healed man out of the women's court into that of the Gentiles. *The porch . . . called Solomon's*—Not as built by him, but as having, for the foundation of the wall on which it rested, an embankment made by him. That wall, the outer facing of one side of the hill, was four hundred cubits high,

Authorized Version.

porch ⁶ that is called Sol^omon's, greatly wondering.

⁶ John 10. 23; chap. 5. 12.

constructed of square stones, exceedingly white, each measuring twenty cubits by six. This colonnade or cloister survived the destruction of the temple by Nebuchadnezzar, and was preserved in the rebuilding by Zerubbabel.—*Canon Cook*. [For the spiritual lessons of this miracle see the Root Thoughts and Practical Thoughts.]

In this emblem see
My own unhappy case,
My nature's poverty
And utter helplessness;
So impotent to good I am,
Who from the womb a cripple came.

Here at the temple's gate
(The real temple) I,
A feeble beggar wait,
And for his mercy cry,
Who only can my wants relieve,
And power and peace and pardon give.
—*J. Wesley*.

Authorities to be Consulted.

Sermons by the Monday Club, 1876. Church in the House, (W. Arnot.) The Bible Educator. The Church of the First Days, (C. J. Vaughan.) Preacher's Lantern, iv, 385. Freeman's Bible Manners and Customs, 595, 704, 806. Bonar's Bible Thoughts and Themes, iii, 32. Foster's Cyclopaedia of Illustrations—ver. 2: 6704; vers. 3-11: *3161; ver. 6: 2461, *3679; ver. 8: 10028. [Numbers marked with star refer to poetical illustrations.]

Root Thoughts.

Under the new dispensation, with its ascended, exalted, and glorified Leader, its seasons of united and mighty prayer, its gifts of speech, its transforming of unstable fishermen into heroic apostles, its adaptation to individual needs, and its practical ministry even to the bodies of men are not forgotten. As under Christ, so under the apostles, though multitudes may shout "Hosanna," and triumphal marches anticipate the final glories of Messianic dominion, the solitary sufferer receives personal attention, the unit is not swallowed up in the universal. But under this new dispensation much better things are given than men expect; the lame man asked alms, when lo, other gifts were bestowed: he walked and leaped and praised God.

The door of conscious need is found ajar, and grace thrusts in something beyond the wildest

Revised Version.

in the 'porch that is called Sol^omon's, greatly wondering.

¹ Or, portico.

dreams and hopes of the dweller within. "Until seven times" cries the lowly-thoughted disciple. "Until seventy times seven" answers the divine helper. I will ask him, says the prodigal, to make me as one of his hired servants, and lo, the father folds him to his arms and recognizes him as son and heir. This is the "abundantly" of Isaiah 55. 7. Verily, what the Lord hath spoken is true: "As the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts."

A little girl in the West recently asked her grandina, "Grandma, when I get big must I keep thinking my little thoughts?" How the fullness and infinitude of the divine grace expands our conceptions of God and his ways!

God's way is a way of gracious surprises. His grace makes men wonder—the men who receive it, and the men who see it.

Grace turns bodily affliction into spiritual opportunity. In human limitations are divine enlargements. Restriction creates receptivity.

The soul does most under grace in the direction of its lack under nature. A sense of need deeply felt tests itself on the side of its conscious deficiency when the supply comes. It is not the lame man who sings, that is for the dumb; it is not the dumb who looks eagerly, that is for him who was blind: so the lame man leaps, the selfish loves, the greedy gives, the skeptical prays.

Here at the Beautiful Gate what a blessed gift! Never had that gate been so beautiful as now.

Practical Thoughts.

[THE CRIPPLE AND THE SINNER.]

1. Like the lame man, the sinner is helpless, unable to walk in the spiritual sense. Ver. 2.

2. Like the lame man, the sinner is born a cripple, his helpless condition, though abnormal and out of the order of the universe, is his by nature. Ver. 2.

3. Like the lame man, the sinner must remain outside the house of God, debarred from the privileges of the sanctuary and the altar. Ver. 2.

4. Like the lame man, the sinner cannot realize the joy and the liberty of those who are able to walk; he knows nothing of the privileges of those whom he sees entering into the temple. Ver. 2.

5. Like the lame man, the sinner lives in the lower world of the flesh, seeking alms, with his highest desire for "silver and gold," and finds but little of it. Ver. 3.

6. Like the lame man, the sinner's opportunity comes when he is not aware of it; he must be awakened to know his privilege and to embrace it. Vers. 4-6.

7. Like the lame man, the sinner receives strength and power by being brought into new relations with Jesus Christ. Ver. 6.

8. Like the lame man, the sinner is brought into the new relation with Christ through hu-

man agencies by men who have been themselves touched by divine power. Ver. 6.

9. Like the lame man, the sinner is made whole through faith in the power of Christ; the faith of a saved man evoking and awakening his own faith. Vers. 6-8.

10. Like the lame man, the saved sinner rejoices and praises God in his temple in the new sense of liberty and power and salvation. Vers. 8, 9.

11. Like the lame man, the saved sinner is seen of all men, and before the world and the Church shows the divine transformation. Ver. 10.

A. D. 30.]

LESSON V.

[Feb. 4.]

THE PRINCE OF LIFE.—Acts 3. 12-21.

GOLDEN TEXT.—In him was life, and the life was the light of men.—JOHN 1. 4.

TIME.—A. D. 30, immediately following the event of the last lesson.

PLACE.—Solomon's Porch in the Temple.

INTRODUCTION.—Peter promptly avails himself, in this bold speech, (made perhaps from some elevated platform or position in the porch,) of the great excitement to base Christ upon this miracle. Do you ask what this miracle means? It declares that your Messiah, by whose power it was alone done, has come to you, even he whom you have slain. Vers. 13-18. The momentous inference is that you must repent of your crime against him, and submit yourself to his divine authority. Vers. 19-26.—*Whedon.*

Authorized Version.

12 And when Pe'ter saw it, he answered unto the people, Ye men of Is'-ra-el, why marvel ye at this? or why look ye so earnestly on us, as though by our own 'power or holiness we had made this man to walk?

12 Cor. 3. 5.

12. Peter saw it—Saw the crowd of people and their wonder. He answered—The address was virtually an answer to a question which the wondering glances and excited movements of the spectators seemed to direct to him.—*Lechler.* Ye men of Israel—The usual form of opening an address to the people, equivalent to our expression, "fellow-citizens." Why marvel ye at this [The Rev. Ver. has at this man, but the marginal reading is at this thing.]—It was indeed marvelous, and they justly wondered at it, but it was no more than what Christ had done many a time, and they had not duly regarded it or been affected with it.—*M. Henry.* Their error was not the wonder itself, though even that would show ignorance and weakness of faith, for it was truly no wonderful thing that had happened, viewed by a believer in Jesus, but their wondering at the apostles, as if they had done it by their own

Revised Version.

12 And when Pe'ter saw it, he answered unto the people, Ye men of Is'-ra-el, why marvel ye at this 'man? or why fasten ye your eyes on us, as though by our own power or godliness we 13 had made him to walk? The God

1 Or, thing.

power.—*Alford.* Look ye . . . on us [Rev. Ver., Fasten ye your eyes upon us]—The gestures of the healed cripple, and the fact that he held fast to the apostles, would naturally call the attention of the crowd to them as the ones who had wrought the miracle. As though by our own power—Power, such as magical craft, or any other supposed means of working miracles.—*Alford.* Or holiness [Rev. Ver., Godliness.]—Godliness, meritorious efficacy with God, so as to have obtained this from him on our own account. The distinction is important: "holiness" of the A. V. is not expressive of the word, which bears in it the idea of operative, cultive piety, rather than of inherent character.—*Alford.* We had made this man to walk—The Holy Spirit had bestowed on Peter and John the grace of humanity as well as the gift of tongues.—*Wordsworth.*

Coveting human praise—Three clergymen

Authorized Version.

13 The ²God of A'bra-ham, and of I'saac, and of Ja'cob, the God of our fathers, ³hath glorified his Son Je'sus; whom ye delivered up, and denied him in the presence of Pi'late, when he was determined to let him go.

14 But ye denied ⁴the Holy One and ⁵the Just, and desired a murderer to be granted unto you;

15 And killed the ⁶Prince of life, whom God hath raised from the dead; whereof we are witnesses.

² Chap. 5. 30.—³ John 7. 39; 12. 16; 17. 1; Phil. 2. 9.—⁴ Psal. 16. 10; Mark 1. 24.—⁵ Chap. 7. 52; 22. 14.—⁶ Or, author; Heb. 2. 10; 5. 9; 1 John 5. 11.

conversing, one said, "Give me praise for my preaching, because I like it." The second said, "Give me praise, that I may give it to my Master." The third said, "Give my Master all the praise, and let me not have any."—*J. C. Gray.*

13. The God of Abraham—He is called the God of Abraham, because Abraham acknowledged him as his God, and because God showed himself to be his friend. He who had been the God of their ancestors had wrought this new wonder, and there was a significance in this title, because it was to Abraham that God had promised to bless all the earth in his seed. This miracle had not been wrought by magic, nor by any unknown power, but by their own God. **The God of our Fathers**—Wisely introduced, to show that no new religion was being taught. —*Canon Cook.* **Hath glorified**—Peter presents next a striking series of contrasts, which at once honor Jesus and condemn his Jewish hearers. God *glorified* Jesus; they surrendered him. Pilate would have *freed* him, and they *denied* him. They rejected the *Holy One*, and preferred a *murderer*. They destroyed the *life* of the Prince of *Life*. They *killed*, but God raised to *life*.—*Whedon.* **His Son**—Rather, *Servant*, [as in Rev. Ver.] Comp. Isa. 52. 13; 43. 10. The condescension and humiliation of Christ, his ministry, not his sonship, were uppermost in the apostle's mind at this time. —*Canon Cook.* **Delivered up**—Matt. 27. 2; John 18. 30. This refers to the authorities, as *denied him* refers to the people, who thwarted Pilate's inclination. John 19. 12; Luke 23. 20. —*Canon Cook.* **When he was determined**—Better, *When he had decided*. The word implying not a purpose only, but a formal act.—*E. H. Plumptre.*

14. The Holy One and the Just—The peculiar titles of the Messiah in the Old Testa-

Revised Version.

of A'braham, and of I'saac, and of Ja'cob, the God of our fathers, hath glorified his ²Servant Jesus; whom ye delivered up, and denied before the face of Pi'late, when he had de-

14 terminated to release him. But ye denied the Holy and Righteous One, and asked for a murderer to be 15 granted unto you, and killed the ³Prince of life; whom God raised from the dead; ⁴whereof we are wit-

² Or, Child; and so in ver. 26; 4. 27, 30. See Matt. 12. 18; Isa. 43. 1; 52. 13; 53. 11.—³ Or, Author.—⁴ Or, of whom.

ment. He is there called the Righteous Branch, the Lord our Righteousness, the Holy One, God's righteous Servant. He is called the Holy One, because he was set apart by God; and the Just One, on account of his innocence and perfect righteousness.—*P. J. Gloag.* **Desired a murderer**—In Greek, *a man, a murderer*, the last noun having all the force of an adjective, a murderous man, that is, one guilty of murder.—*J. A. Alexander.*

15. And killed—Though probably none of the Jews then and there present did actually nail Christ unto his cross, yet they having given their consent unto it, they are charged with *kill-ing the Lord of life*. A plenary and full consent to the sins of others makes us deeply guilty of other's sins.—*Burkitt.* **Prince of life**—The person sent by God to lead you to eternal life, having purchased it by his death, showed the way to it by his doctrine, and being appointed to dispense it to his faithful servants. —*Whitby.* **Whom God hath raised**—This is the great fact of the resurrection of Jesus, upon which rests the entire superstructure of Christian doctrine. If it were disproved, then the keystone of the arch is broken, and all the gospel falls with it. Hence on every occasion the apostles proclaimed it, testified to it, and urged its acceptance upon their hearers. In all the Acts there is not a sermon or discourse without a clear allusion to this basal fact, except the defense of Stephen, which was cut short before its conclusion. **We are witnesses**—The twelve apostles, every one of whom had seen the risen Christ, and to whose resurrection it was their principal work, as apostles, to testify.

That was the blood of Christ upon them, but it did not cleanse. It was the blood of the curse, not the blood of blessing. Peter pours it upon the murderers' head, a scorching flood.—*W. Arnot.*

Authorized Version.

16 And ^ahis name through faith in his name hath made this man strong, whom ye see and know; yea, the faith which is by him hath given him this perfect soundness in the presence of you all.

17 And now, brethren, I wot that through ignorance ^bye did it, as *did* also your rulers.

18 But those things, which God before had showed ^aby the mouth of all

^a Matt. 9, 22; 1 Peter 1, 21.—^b Luke 23, 34; 1 Cor. 2, 8; 1 Tim. 1, 13.—Psa. 22; Isa. 50, 6; 53, 5; Dan. 9, 26; 1 Peter 1, 10.

16. And his name—His *name*, as uttered by us, was the mediate cause; his divine *self*, called by that humble *name*, is the primal real cause. Jesus was therefore present in the deed and in this assembly.—*Whedon*. Through faith in his name—The name did not work as a formula of incantation; it required, on the part both of the worker and the receiver, faith in that which the Name represented—the manifestation of the Father through the Son.—*E. H. Plumptre*. The faith which is by him [*The faith which is through him*, Rev. Ver.]—Not our faith in him, (Piscator;) nor our faith in God, or our miraculous faith, (De Wette;) but rather that faith which is wrought or produced in us by him, (Alford, Meyer, Olshausen).—*P. J. Gloag*. The causation of the miracle is carried yet another step backward. The faith which was alike in the healer and in the man healed, was in itself wrought in each by the power of Christ.—*E. H. Plumptre*. In the presence of you all—Visible to your own eyes is the demonstration of the divine power which we affirm! If this man is sound, Jesus is the risen Messiah! And if Jesus is Messiah, then your Messiah have you murdered!—*Whedon*.

No one ever supposes that it is the uniting hook, or link, or coupling that draws the train. A child knows that it is the engine that draws it. Nevertheless, without that hook, or link, or coupling, all the power of the engine were of no avail; the train would stand still for ever. Exactly so is it in the relation of faith to Christ. It is not our faith that saves us, but Christ that saves us.—*Grosart*.

17. Brethren—Soothing and encouraging as compared with the formal address in verse 12. Peter commenced with severe rebuke, but he would not drive them to desperation. I wot—I know, am aware, as in Spenser and Shakspeare. The apostle had warrant for this in his Master's words, (Luke 23, 34,) and would encourage them

Revised Version.

16 nesses. And ^aby faith in his name hath his name made this man strong, whom ye behold and know: yea, the faith which is through him hath given him this perfect soundness in

17 the presence of you all. And now, brethren, I wot that in ignorance ye

18 did it, as did also your rulers. But the things which God foreshewed by the mouth of all the prophets, that

^a Or, on the ground of.

to hope for forgiveness.—*Canon Cook*. Through ignorance ye did it [Rev. Ver. *in ignorance*.]—It admits of all degrees—from the unlearned who were implicitly led by others, and hated him because others did, up to the most learned of the scribes, who knew and rightly interpreted the Messianic prophecies, but, from moral blindness, or perverted expectations, did not recognize them in our Lord. Even Caiaphas himself, of whom apparently this could least be said, may be brought under it in some measure; *even he* could hardly have delivered over Jesus to Pilate with the *full* consciousness that he was the Messiah, and that he himself was accomplishing prophecy by so doing. *Some degree* of ignorance there must have been in them all.—*Alford*. Ignorance may lessen faults; but not change their natures. Sin shall be sin, though it be done ignorantly.—*Bishop Babington*. But if ignorance retained them within the scope of pardon, it is full time for them now to *know*. A preached gospel brings its new responsibilities, and under liabilities to deeper condemnation.—*Whedon*.

Peter sheathes his weapon as soon as its work is done. As soon as the preacher sees that the dividing Word has taken effect he begins to give consolation. It was Whitefield who, when his audience of coal-miners was so large that he could not read in the distant, dark faces, the emotions of their hearts, perceived, by certain white streaks made by coursing tears on sable cheeks, that the word had cut the conscience. That was for him the turning-point. The strokes for wounding may now safely cease and the healing work begin.—*W. Arnot*.

18. God before had showed [Rev. Ver., *foreshewed*.]—The foreknowledge of God is set in strong contrast with the ignorance of men.—*Canon Cook*. All his prophets—The prophets are here regarded as *one body*, actuated by *one Spirit*; and the sum of God's purpose, shown by their testimony, is, that *his Christ should suffer*.

Authorized Version.

his prophets, that Christ should suffer, he hath so fulfilled.

19 Repent ye therefore, and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out, when the times of refreshing shall come from the presence of the Lord ;

20 And he shall send Je'sus Christ, which before was preached unto you :

—*Alford*. All the special prophecies of old Scripture about lesser persons and objects are but subsidiary and supporting to the prophecies of Christ. The passages that pre-delineate him are the keystone of the whole prophetic arch.—

Whedon. That Christ should suffer—Peter's words glance at the objection ready to rise to every Jewish mouth—"Jesus the Messiah! Why he was put to death by law, and our Messiah is to be glorious king of Israel." Aye, but the prophets all agree that he "should suffer." Your slaying him proves not that he is not Messiah.—*Whedon*. So fulfilled—By your instrumentality, which was guilty; notwithstanding the result. Their acts were overruled, but their wills were not controlled.—*Canon Cook*. The doctrine of a suffering Messiah was totally at variance with the current views of the Jewish Church, and hard to digest, even by the Twelve, up to the day of their Lord's resurrection. Our preacher himself revolted at it, and protested against it, when first nakedly announced, for which he received a terrible rebuke. Here he affirms it to be the fundamental truth of ancient prophecy, realized unwittingly by the Jews themselves, yet by a glorious divine ordination. How great a change the Pentecostal illumination wrought upon his views!—*J. F. B.*

19. Repent . . . be converted—Repent is to change the *mind*, to reverse the current of thought, feeling, will, from self to God; therefore, the Scripture says repentance *toward* God. Be converted is to change the *life*, to correspond with the changed thought and feeling. One result of this double, *entire* change, is the utter emasure of the sin that our past life has set down in the "book of account."—*J. G. Butler*. That your sins may be blotted out—The image that underlies the words (as in Col. 2. 14) is that of an indictment which catalogues the sins of the penitent; and which the pardoning love of the Father cancels.—*E. H. Plumptre*. This figurative expression was much more forcible with the ancient mode of obliteration, by applying the blunt end of the *stylus* to the wax on which letters had been traced with the sharp end.—*Canon Cook*. When the times—[Rev.

Revised Version.

his Christ should suffer, he thus fulfilled. Repent ye therefore, and turn again, that your sins may be blotted out, that so there may come seasons of refreshing from the presence of the Lord; and that he may send the Christ who hath been appointed for you, even Je'sus: whom

Ver., that so there may come seasons.] As in Vulgate, in order that times of refreshing (*of repose*, Syr.) may come; the form of expression is the same as in Luke 2. 35.—*Canon Cook*. The thought is that again expressed both by Peter (2 Peter 3. 12) and by Paul (Rom. 11. 25-27:) that the conversion of sinners, especially the conversion of Israel, will have a power to accelerate the fulfillment of God's purposes, and, therefore, the coming of his kingdom in its completeness.

—*E. H. Plumptre*. Times of refreshing—The Greek word for *refreshing* admits of a two-fold derivation, according to which it properly denotes either cooling and relief from heat, or the recovery of breath after exhaustion. In either case, the essential meaning is the same, although the first is the idea naturally suggested by the English word *refreshing*. What is here meant is relief from toil or suffering, not without an implication of more positive enjoyment.—*J. A. Alexander*. Some have understood the Gospel dispensation. Others, the last judgment, as giving access to the rest anticipated by Paul, (2. Thess. 1. 7,) and to renovation of all things, (Rev. 21. 4, 5.) To believers the Second Advent ought to be a joyous thought; death is to be swallowed up in victory, and the Lord God shall wipe away all tears from all faces.—*Canon Cook*.

The times of refreshing experienced by the repentant and believing: (1) In the external relations of life, after sore afflictions; (2) In the inner life, after the godly sorrow of the soul; (3) In eternity, after the toils of this life.—*Gerok*.

20. And he shall send [In the Rev. Ver. this verse reads, *And that he may send the Christ who hath been appointed for you, even Jesus*.]—Both the times of refreshing and the sending of Christ are plainly described as having some dependence on their repentance and conversion. Hence arises the not unscriptural idea that the time of Christ's second advent is conditional upon human conduct. But it is the *blessed side* of that advent rather which is here conditional. Times of refreshing and Christ's glorious coming to us may depend upon our repent-

Authorized Version.

21 Whom ⁹the heaven must receive until the times of ¹⁰restitution of all things, which God hath spoken by the mouth of all his holy prophets since the world began.

⁹ Chap. 1. 11; Heb. 8. 1.—¹⁰ Matt. 17. 11.

ance and *faith*.—*Whedon*. Which before was preached—[Rather, as in Rev. Ver., *Who hath been appointed*.] Peter here speaks, as was usual in the apostolic Church, with that vivid conception of the Second Advent, as if its immediate shadow was cast upon the present.—*Whedon*.

21. Whom the heaven must receive—Till this great cycle has achieved its revolution, and this great remedial process has accomplished its design, the glorified body of the risen and ascended Christ not only may, but must, as an appointed means of that accomplishment, be resident in heaven, and not on earth.—*J. A. Alexander*. Until the times of restitution [Rev. Ver., *restoration*.]—Peter embraced the whole period between the ascension and the Second Advent, when the regeneration, (Matt. 19. 28,) will take full effect, when the creature shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God, (Rom. 8. 19-21,) by the bringing in the new heaven and new earth (2 Peter 3. 13; Rev. 21. 1-5,) of all things, out of the confusion caused by sin, unto the harmony of creation before the fall.—*Canon Cook*. What is this *restoration*? According to the usage of the word, it cannot be applied to the works of the Spirit in the hearts of men, but must be understood of the *glorious restoration of all things, the regeneration* (Matt. 19. 28,) which, as Peter here says, is the theme of all the prophets from the beginning.—*Alford*. Of all things—It does not necessarily imply, as some have thought, the final salvation of all men, but it does express the idea of a state in which "righteousness," and not "sin" shall have dominion over a redeemed and new-created world; and that idea suggests a wider hope as to the possibilities of growth in wisdom and holiness; or even of repentance and conversion, in the unseen world than with which Christendom has too often been content.—*E. H. Plumptre*. All his holy prophets—They are here called holy, not so much in relation to personal as to official character. As Aaron in his character of high-priest, was the saint or holy one of God, (Psa. 106. 16,) notwithstanding his infirmities and errors, so the prophets are collectively described as holy, not as having all been eminently pious, but as having all been consecrated, set

Revised Version.

the heaven must receive until the times of restoration of all things, whereof God spake by the mouth of his holy prophets which have been since the world began.

apart, devoted, to a special purpose.—*J. A. Alexander*. Since the world began—Literally, of old, or from time immemorial. The meaning is that from the beginning of prophecy, its theme has been the glory of the world when renewed by Christ.

The threefold restoration: (1) It *did* occur, when the way of salvation, under the new covenant, was opened; (2) It *does* occur, when we are converted; (3) It *will* occur, in the consummation of the world.—*A. F. Schmidt*.

Authorities to be Consulted.

The Church in the House, (W. Arnot.) Simon's *Horæ Homileticæ*. John Fletcher's works, vol. vii. Pulpit Cyclopædia, 122. Bonar's Bible Thoughts and Themes, 3. 36. Foster's Cyclopædia of Illustrations, [Figures marked with star refer to poetical illustrations]—*1908, 2354, 4964, 5079, 6068, 6326, 8592.

Root Thoughts.

The lame man healed was not half so weak an object in his condition as Peter had been himself before the "Lovest thou me?" of the Lord, and the tongue of fire at Pentecost. Now we see poor, lame, hesitating, disloyal Peter, having received strength from the same Lord, whose messenger he is, standing up boldly before all the people. Peter's position is more marvelous, a greater miracle, than that of the lame man whom the divine word had healed.

Peter begins a sermon in Solomon's Porch, and his doctrine is taken from the Book.

It is a good sermon. He begins by correcting the false convictions of his hearers. He wonders at their wonder, reproves their surprise, and sharply rebukes their unbelief. They ought to have known what God could do; they ought to have known long before what Jesus Christ had done, and what he is still must be able to do, and, knowing their own scripture, why should they marvel at these things? Then he began far back in their history, with Abraham and Isaac and Jacob, and connected the sacred past with the splendid present, the familiar beginning with the surprising end, the root long ago planted with the blossom and fruit now filling the air with fragrance, and refreshing the children of men.

He hides nothing concerning the shame of the servant, Jesus. He hides nothing concerning the sin of the people who denied him, and demanded his death. He did not smooth over the facts of their iniquity; but boldly, sharply, and uncompromisingly unveiled their guilt.

Then to seal his claim, silence their doubt, account for the miracle, sustain their own divine history, and prove the fulfillment of their prophecy, he placed emphasis on the resurrection by the Lord of the Author of life whom they "killed." God did it, and we see it.

When he had wounded by plain speech, he sought to heal by sweet assurance. From the smitten rock the waters of gracious comfort and healing gushed. After the bold charge, he proclaimed a blessed gospel.

Over the hard, lifeless, trellis-work of Jewish history he trailed a vine of life with its pleasant shadows and its goodly fruit.

Practical Thoughts.

[JESUS AS PREACHED BY THE APOSTLES.]

1. Jesus is proclaimed as the source and power of all the wondrous works wrought by his disciples. Vers. 12, 13.

2. Jesus is proclaimed as in unison with the earlier revelation, and as its natural outcome. Ver. 13.

3. Jesus is proclaimed as slain by guilty men, but raised up and glorified by the Father. Vers. 13, 14.

4. Jesus is proclaimed as the Holy and the Just, though crucified as a malefactor. Ver. 14.

5. Jesus is proclaimed as the author and prince of life, through his own resurrection, attested by living witnesses. Ver. 15.

6. Jesus is proclaimed as the object of faith and the giver of spiritual strength and salvation. Ver. 16.

7. Jesus is proclaimed as the fulfillment of prophecy in his life, death, and resurrection. Ver. 18.

8. Jesus is proclaimed as the only means of forgiveness through repentance and faith. Ver. 19.

9. Jesus is proclaimed as abiding in heaven until the consummation and restoration of all things. Ver. 21.

10. Jesus is proclaimed as destined to come again to earth in the last days. Vers. 20, 21.

A. D. 30.]

LESSON VI.

[Feb. 11.]

NONE OTHER NAME.—Acts 4. 1-14.

GOLDEN TEXT.—Neither is there salvation in any other; for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved.—ACTS 4. 12.

TIME.—A. D. 30, immediately following the events of the last lesson.

PLACE.—Jerusalem.

INTRODUCTION.—Peter's four speeches rise in a climax both of publicity and magnanimous boldness. The first was to the inner circle of the eleven; the second was before the pentecostal assembly; the third was before the Jews in Solomon's Porch; this last is before the high court of the nation. The first filled up the ranks of the young Church; the second pronounced its manifesto; the third opened its aggressive movement upon Israel; this fourth announces the separation between the now dead Church of the past and the new living Church of the future. Face to face stand the representatives of obsolete Judaism and those of vital Christianity. Here is commenced the rupture. Here the two begin to branch off, the apparently stronger into weakness and withering, the weaker into growth and power, revealing itself as the actual trunk.—*Whedon*.

Authorized Version.

1 And as they spake unto the people, the priests, and the captain of the

a Or, ruler; Luke 22. 4; chap. 5. 24.

1. As they spake—Peter addressed one portion of the multitude, while John was speaking to others. The priests—Those on the spot, discharging their duties in the order of their course, who had been officiating at the sacrifice of the ninth hour. They may have felt affronted by unlearned men presuming to come forward as

Revised Version.

4 And as they spake unto the people, the priests and the captain of the

1 Some ancient authorities read the chief priests.

public instructors.—*Canon Cook*. The captain of the temple—The "captain of the temple" (see Luke 22. 4) was the head of the band of Levite sentinels whose function it was to keep guard over the sacred precincts. He, as an inspector, made his round by night, visited all the gates, and roused the slumberers. His presence

Authorized Version.

temple, and the Sad'du-ces, came upon them,

2 Being ¹grieved that they taught the people, and preached through Je'sus the resurrection from the dead.

3 And they laid hands on them, and put *them* in hold unto the next day: for it was now eventide.

4 Howbeit many of them which heard

¹ Neh. 2. 10; Matt. 22, 23; Acts 23. 8.

implied that the quiet order of the temple was supposed to be endangered.—*E. H. Plumptre.* The Sadducees—The Sadducees are said to have derived their name from one Sadok, about the time of Alexander the Great, (B. C. 323,) but more probably they were named from the Hebrew *Tsaddik, righteousness.* They rejected *all tradition*, but did not, as some have supposed, confine their canon of Scripture to the Pentateuch. The denial of a future state does not appear to have been an original tenet of Sadduceeism, but to have sprung from its abuse. The particular side of religionism represented by the Sadducees was bare, literal, moral conformity, without any higher views or hopes. They thus escaped the dangers of tradition, but fell into deadness and worldliness, and a denial of spiritual influence. While our Lord was on earth, this state of mind was very prevalent among the educated classes throughout the Roman Empire; and most of the Jews of rank and station were Sadducees.—*Alford.* This small but wealthy and powerful sect of rationalistic deists was, to be sure, no more popular at that time than it usually was; but it held the chief offices of state, it controlled the priesthood, it was noted for harsh severity where it had the power, and just then it had reasons of its own for resenting extremely the teaching of the new faith.—*J. O. Dykes.* Came upon them—Not in any official capacity, but irritated by the testimony borne to the resurrection of Jesus. Hostility to Christianity came at this time as exclusively from this sect as in the Gospel history enmity to our Lord was shown by the Pharisees.—*Canon Cook.*

2. Being grieved [Rev. Ver., *Being sore troubled.*]—We see the three pretexts upon which this assemblage was broken up by the three assailing parties—the hierarchy, the military, and the theology, namely, by the *priests.* because these laymen taught *the people*; by the *captain* and his police, because so large a gathering was disturbing Solomon's Porch, perhaps

Revised Version.

temple and the Sad'du-ces came upon

2 them, being sore troubled because they taught the people, and proclaimed in Je'sus the resurrection from the dead. And they laid hands on them, and put them in ward unto the morrow: for it was now eventide.
4 But many of them that heard the word

obstructing the passage through Gate Shushan and threatening the tranquility of the city; and by the *Sadducees*, because their doctrine was the resurrection.—*Whedon.* Preached through Jesus [Rev. Ver., *Proclaimed in Jesus.*]*—Literally, preached in Jesus, i. e.,* in this as the crucial instance in which the resurrection of the dead had been made manifest.—*E. H. Plumptre.* The resurrection from the dead—It was by an unexpected revolution that the Sadducees became the leading assailants of Christianity. While Jesus lived his collisions were mainly with the Pharisees. His issue was mainly with the matters for which *they* were zealous, namely, the temple, the ritual, the rabbinical traditions. But after the death of Jesus his followers zealously attended the temple worship, while the doctrine of *the resurrection* became their prominent point, against which the Sadducees, holding neither angel, spirit, soul, nor resurrection, were utterly opposed.—*Whedon.*

3. They laid hands on them—Expressive of an arrest in a somewhat violent manner, as if done by persons who were excited and angry. Put them in hold—Placed them in custody, not for punishment, but for safe-keeping, until the matter should be investigated by the authorities, and a decision arrived at. The Rev. Ver. has *put them in ward.* It was now eventide—This must have been the second of the Jewish evenings, (Exod. 12. 6, margin,) and is noted to show that the apostles continued their labors throughout the day. The miracle was not wrought till the ninth hour, about 3 P. M. Some have calculated that the interruption from the captain of the temple cannot have been earlier than seven or eight o'clock.—*Canon Cook.* Such is the experience of the Gospel; it offers mercy to the world, and receives evil in return. Psal. 109. 5.—*Starke.*

4. Many . . . heard the word believed—Received it as true, and trusted in the Saviour whom it offered. This is one of the standing Scriptural expressions for the saving change de-

Authorized Version.

the word believed; and the number of the men was about five thousand.

5 And it came to pass on the morrow, that their rulers, and elders, and scribes,

6 And ²An'nas the high-priest, and Ca'ia-phas, and John, and Al-ex-an'der, and as many as were of the kindred of the high-priest, were gathered together at Je-ru'sa-lem.

² Luke 3. 2; John 11. 49; 18. 13.

scribed, in modern religious phraseology, as getting religion, becoming pious, becoming a Christian, or obtaining a hope; with respect to all which harmless, but needless, innovations on the primitive Church dialect it may well be said, "The old is better."—*J. A. Alexander.* The number of men—The Greek word for "men" here is that which signifies males as distinguished from females. But it does not appear whether we are to take this strictly as masculine, or more loosely, as if it were the more general term.—*Alford.* Was [Rev. Ver., *came to be*] about five thousand—This has been understood as the aggregate of all who, down to this time, had embraced the Gospel, including the hundred and twenty (chap. 1. 15) and the three thousand (chap. 2. 41).—*Canon Cook.*

The preachers were arrested, but as Paul expresses it, (2 Tim. 2. 9,) the word of God was not bound.—*J. A. Alexander.*

5. Their rulers and elders and scribes—

The three classes of men here mentioned made up the Sanhedrim, or great council of *seventy*, the supreme legislature, especially in ecclesiastical matters, of the Jewish nation. The *chief priests* were (in addition to the high-priest) the ex-high priests, the heads of the priestly courses, and eminent men of the priestly order. The *elders* were laymen of age, wisdom, and ability. The *scribes* were the learned class, whether of Levitical descent or otherwise. How the members of the Sanhedrim were elected is not certain. Of this body the high-priest was the usual summoner and president. At his right hand sat the vice-president, at his left the *hakim*, or counselor, who gave legal opinions. From these the members sat, extending in a semicircle, around the council-room. From the heat of the climate, this council often held its sessions very early in the morning, as in the case of our Saviour's arraignment. The Sanhedrim's session room was at the hall Gazith, at the south-east corner of the court of Israel.—*Whedon.* The scribes were originally the copyists of the law, and

Revised Version.

believed; and the number of the men came to be about five thousand.

5 And it came to pass on the morrow, that their rulers and elders and scribes were gathered together in Je-ru'sa-lem; and An'nas the high priest *was there*, and Ca'ia-phas, and John, and Al-ex-an'der, and as many as were of 7 the kindred of the high priest. And

from their acquaintance with it became its recognized expounders and teachers. They formed a regularly organized college, into which members were admitted by special and severe examination. They made no charge for their instructions, and were always expected to be ready to answer questions with regard to the interpretation and application of the law. The heads of the order were members of the Sanhedrim, and all its members were held in great respect by the people. Some of them were men of high character and thorough knowledge, and to their labors the world owes gratitude for the preservation of the Old Testament text in its completeness. But many of them were narrow in their views, and perverted the Scripture to suit their own purposes, "making void the law through their traditions."

6. *Annas the high-priest*—Called Ananus by Josephus 18: 11; 1: 20; 9: 1. Having held the office eleven years, till deposed by Valerius Gratus, the Roman procurator, A. D. 23, he retained the confidence of the people, and was deemed by them *jure divino* high-priest, although the authority of Caiaphas, his son-in-law, alone was recognized by the Romans. Both are mentioned as high-priests at the beginning of the ministry of the Baptist, (Luke 3. 2;) and, in accordance with Jewish feeling, our Lord was led away to Annas first, and by him sent bound to Caiaphas. John 18. 13, 24. Besides Caiaphas, four sons, or sons-in-law, of Annas at different times held the office of high-priest. Josephus 20: 9, 1. No fewer than twenty-eight high-priests are enumerated in the thirty-three years between 87 and 70 A. D. See the note on chap. 23. 5.—*Canon Cook.* John and Alexander—However important these two characters were in their day (and Luke intimates, by mentioning them, that they were weighty personages) no other certain trace of them exists in any history besides this verse. They are indebted to their participation in the trial of these two humble apostles for all the sure record they have left on earth.—*Whedon.*

Authorized Version.

7 And when they had set them in the midst, they asked, ³By what power, or by what name, have ye done this?

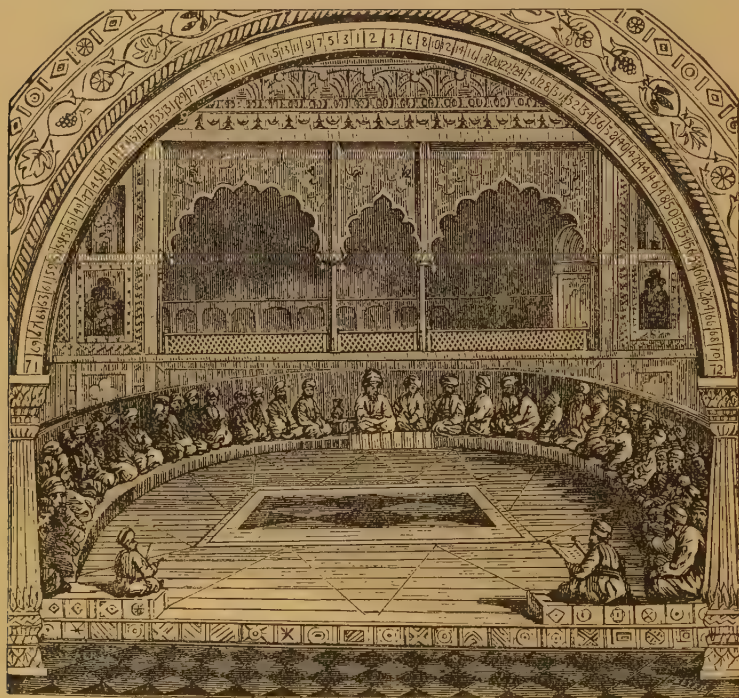
³ Exod. 2. 14; Matt. 21. 23; chap. 7. 27.

The kindred of the high-priest—The ex-high-priest Annas managed the affairs of the state so wisely that many of its important offices were in the possession of his family. Hence they were largely represented in the council. [In the Rev. Ver., *Were gathered together in Jerusalem* is placed at the end of verse 5.] **At Jerusalem**—Why is this specified? I believe it merely implies that the meet-

Revised Version.

when they had set them in the midst, they inquired, By what power, or in 8 what name, have ye done this? Then

beside them. Ver. 14. **In the midst**—Light-foot noted that members of the Sanhedrim sat in a semicircle. This was an opportunity for addressing the highest authorities the apostles could hardly have expected.—*Canon Cook*. **By what power . . . name**—Incantators and exorcists were accustomed to perform their prodigies in the name of some mighty one, as Solomon, Abraham, Raphael, or God.—*Whedon*. It is



The Sanhedrim in Session.

ing was not held *in the temple*, but *in the city*.—*Alford*.

Pontiffs and priests, scribes and Pharisees, Herod and Pilate, and the inhabitants of Jerusalem, condemned the Truth; they crucified and buried it; but it rose from the tomb and conquered them all, sending forth in its stead twelve preachers of the Word.—*John Huss*.

7. **Set them**—Peter and John, with the lame-born man, who still clung to them, and stood

impossible to comprehend the history of the planting of our faith through a divine supernaturalism without realizing how thoroughly the world, heathen and Hebrew, was then saturated with the conception of a demoniac and magical supernaturalism. It is in this light we must read the question of the Sanhedrim.—*J. O. Dykes*. **Have ye done this**—There is a touch of scorn in the way in which they speak of the thing itself. They will not as

Authorized Version.

8 Then ¹Pe'ter, filled with the Holy Ghost, said unto them, Ye rulers of the people, and elders of Is'ra-el,

9 If we this day be examined of the good deed done to the impotent man, by what means he is made whole;

10 Be it known unto you all, and to all the people of Is'ra-el, ²that by the name of Je'sus Christ of Naz'a-reth, whom ye crucified, whom God raised from the dead, ³even by him doth this man stand here before you whole.

11 This ⁴is the stone which was set

⁴ Luke 12. 11.—⁵ Chap. 3. 6.—⁶ Psa. 118. 22; Isa. 28. 16; Matt. 21. 42; Rom. 9. 33.

yet call it a "sign," or "wonder," but "Have ye done *this*?"—*E. H. Plumptre*. The Sanhedrim thought that if the apostles, in answering the question, avoided the name of Jesus, they would lose influence with the people; if they alleged that name, they might bring themselves within the range of a charge of blasphemy, such as had been made by the Jewish authorities against their Master.—*Canon Cook*.

8. **Filled with the Holy Ghost**—The tense implies an immediate sudden inspiration, giving the wisdom and courage and words which were needed at the time. The promises of Matt. 10. 19, 20; Luke 21. 14, 15, were abundantly fulfilled.—*E. H. Plumptre*. Wanting the Spirit, Peter was not able to bear witness for the Lord in the presence of a serving-maid; with the Spirit, Peter held his judges fascinated by the glance of his eye while he pierced them with his word.—*Arnot*. **Ye rulers . . . and elders**—A respectful salutation to the council, which represented the highest authority of the nation.

9. **If we . . . be examined**—There might seem a gentle sarcasm in this expression, but there was a warning and awakening truth.—*Whedon*. **Of the good deed**—As if he should say to them, Worthy magistrates are not "a terror to good works, but to the evil." How is it, then, that we are now called in question for this good deed?—*W. Selneccerus*. The world is willing to excuse the acts of the ungodly, but not those of an upright pastor and Christian. There were many sinners in Jerusalem who escaped all punishment, but the apostles are imprisoned on account of a good deed.—*Starke*. **Done to the impotent man**—A miracle of healing could not reasonably be referred to an evil spirit, was no fit subject for legal investigation, and ought not to have been visited with imprisonment.—*Canon Cook*.

10. **Be it known unto you all**—The repre-

Revised Version.

Pe'ter, filled with the Holy Ghost, said unto them, Ye rulers of the people, and elders, if we this day are examined concerning a good deed done to an impotent man, ²by what means this man is ³made whole; be it known unto you all, and to all the people of Is'ra-el, that in the name of Je'sus Christ of Naz'a-reth, whom ye crucified, whom God raised from the dead, ⁴even in ⁵him doth this man stand here before you whole. He is the stone which was set at nought

² Or, in whom.—³ Or, saved.—⁴ Or, this name.

sentative of the Church of Jesus was now for the first time brought face to face before the very men who had condemned to death that Church's Head. **All the people of Israel**—He would have the widest publicity given to his declarations, and flings down the gage of battle to the whole apostate nation. **By the name of Jesus** [See notes on verse 16, Lesson V.]—By avowing that, in the name of Jesus, not nominally in that of "Jehovah," the cure had been effected, he ran the risk of being condemned for sorcery. By preaching to their face the resurrection of Jesus as the divine authentication of his power, he braved the strongest and the most implacable party in the court.—*J. O. Dykes*. **Jesus Christ** [The word Christ is the Greek form for the Hebrew "Messiah," meaning "Anointed One."]—The name Jesus alone had been used, chap. 2. 22; 3. 13. This is the first instance in which they were accused of crucifying the Messiah.—*Canon Cook*. **Whom ye crucified**—Guilty of a good deed, these prisoners arraign their judges for a most bloody deed.—*Whedon*. **Whom God raised from the dead**—He tells them that God raised him from the dead, and they could not for shame answer him with that foolish suggestion, that they palmed upon the people, that his disciples came by night and stole him away.—*M. Henry*. **Even by him**—The boldness of the declaration was startling. He does not shrink now from confessing the Nazarene as the Messiah. He presses home the fact that, though Pilate had given the formal sentence, it was they who had crucified their King. He proclaims that he has been raised from the dead, and is still as a power working to heal as when on earth.—*E. H. Plumptre*. **Stand**—And so his legs speak, though his tongue be silent.—*Whedon*.

11. **This is the stone** [Rev. Ver., *He is the stone*.] Peter quotes Psa. 118, and thereby

Authorized Version.

at nought of you builders, which is become the head of the corner.

12 Neither ⁷is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men whereby we must be saved.

13 Now when they saw the boldness of Pe'ter and John, ⁸and perceived that

Revised Version.

of you the builders, which was made 12 the head of the corner. And in none other is there salvation: for neither is there any other name under heaven, that is given among men, wherein we must be saved.

13 Now when they beheld the boldness of Peter and John, and had per-

⁷Matt. 1. 21; chap. 10. 43; Rom. 3. 24; 1 Tim. 2. 5.—⁸Matt. 11. 25; 1 Cor. 1. 27.

identifies Jesus with David, who there speaks in the first person. And Peter may have remembered that Christ quoted the same passage. Matt. 21. 42.—*Whedon. Set at nought of you builders* [Rev. Ver., *You, the builders.*].—On the Sanhedrim, more bluntly than on the crowd, he charges the death of Jesus as the rejection of God's Christ. They, not the people, were the official "builders" of God's temple on earth; yet they, more truly than the people, had refused that chosen and precious "Stone" on which alone the temple could rest.—*J. O. Dykes. Become the head of the corner*—The top stone at an angle of the building, of great weight and importance in their roofs, built of solid flat stones, to admit of being walked upon. Christ, as the Corner-stone, united Jews and Gentiles, as he united the two natures, the Godhead and the Manhood. His own name (Peter, "the Rock,") must have helped to endear this psalm to the apostle's mind.—*Canon Cook.*

12. Neither is there salvation in any other [Rev. Ver., *And in none other is there salvation.*].—The Greek has the article before "salvation." That of which Peter spoke was the salvation which the rulers professed to be looking for.—*E. H. Plumptre. None other name*—The word *name* here is used to denote the person himself; there is no other *being* or *person*. As we should say, "There is no one who can save but Jesus."—*Barnes.* It appears from this passage that the invocation of the Virgin Mary, or any other saint, either for eternal salvation, or for relief from bodily disease, is not only useless, but sinful.—*Mann.* For man there is no Saviour but Christ; no salvation but from his atonement. Even those who never heard his name, if saved, are saved by his gracious power. Actual faith by those who truly know him, and virtual faith, "the spirit of faith," in those who know him not, are the tie which binds the sinner to the cross and its salvation.—*Whedon. Given among men* [Rev. Ver., *That is given among men.*].—Literally, *that*

has been given. The words must be taken in the sense which Peter had learnt to attach to the thought of the name as the symbol of the personality and power. To those to whom it had been made known, and who had taken in all that it embodied, the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth was the one true source of deliverance and salvation.—*E. H. Plumptre. Must be saved*—Not only *may*, as a matter of option or of right, but *must*, as a matter of necessity. If saved at all, we *must* be saved through Christ Jesus, for there is no other Saviour and no other salvation.

There was but one place of safety when the flood came—the ark. There was but one man to whom the Egyptians could go for corn during the famine—Joseph. There was but one way to keep off the angel of death, on the Passover night—the way of the sprinkled blood. There was but one word that could save the Ephraimites at Jordan's ford (Judges 11)—the word Shibboleth. So there is but one name that hath power to save men now—the name of Jesus.—*J. C. Ryle.*

If men need not to go to heaven by the Cross, but by some other way, then the Cross may become an old, worn, unused way; no footfall of a traveler may cheer it, heaven may be filled through other avenues, and other songs than those of praise to the Lamb may echo through the arches of the Upper Temple. If Christ is not the exclusive Saviour, then other Saviours could be made without the Cross, and the Cross is all an idle waste. We are lost men outside of God's kingdom. There is a way into it—Jesus Christ. There is a name, one name, given whereby we can be saved—that name is Jesus. There has come from the sweet heavens over us no other. It is enough. We need no other.—*J. Drummond.*

13. When they saw [Rev. Ver., *Beheld.*].—The idea is not simply that they *saw* the boldness of the two apostles, but that they *surveyed* it for some time before they could account for it.—*J. A. Alexander. The boldness*—There was in their style, both of action and language, a clear, calm freedom, not as if they strained themselves to hardihood, but as if they were unconscious of any demand for nerve. It was

Authorized Version.

they were unlearned and ignorant men, they marveled; and they took knowledge of them, that they had been with Jesus.

14 And beholding the man which was healed standing with them, they could say nothing against it.

quiet self-possession, as if they were speaking respectfully and evenly to equals.—*Whedon*.

Of Peter and John—John, so far as we read, had not spoken; but look and bearing, and perhaps unrecorded words, showed that he too shared Peter's courage.—*E. H. Plumptre*.

Unlearned and ignorant men—They were destitute of rabbinical learning and were not acknowledged by the authorities as professional, official instructors of the people. Compare John 7. 15, 49. There is no warrant here for an unlearned ministry; the apostles had been taught by their divine Master, and were under the guidance of the Holy Ghost.—*Canon Cook*.

Marveled . . . took knowledge—Their astonishment setting them to think, and reminding them that they had seen these men with Jesus.—*Alford*.

Took knowledge of them—Better, *they began to recognize*. The tense is in the imperfect, implying that one after another of the rulers began to remember the persons of the two apostles as they had seen them with their Master in the temple. These two, and these two alone, may have been seen by many of the council on that early dawn of the day of the Crucifixion in the court-yard of the high-priest's palace. John 18. 15.—*E. H. Plumptre*. **They had been with Jesus**—It is the very life of Christ himself, breathed into his saints, which forms the characteristic of their Christian life. That Spirit of Christ looks through their serenely confident eyes, speaks in their free, undoubting sentences, even as it informs their gracious and mighty deeds; till they grow, in supreme moments, to be so like reproductions of that Christ whom the world refused, as to vex the world's conscience with the recollection of its rejected Lord.—*J. O. Dykes*. We thought we had got rid of Him, but lo! he reappears in these men, and all that troubled us in the Nazarene himself has yet to be put down in these, his disciples.—*J. F. B.*

It is a most notable instance of what has often occurred when the wicked world has striven to put out its moral lights. John is beheaded, but the fame of Jesus troubles King Herod; Jesus is crucified, but Peter charges the Sanhedrim with his death; Stephen is stoned, but Saul returns a

Revised Version.

ceived that they were unlearned and ignorant men, they marveled; and they took knowledge of them, that they had been with Jesus. And seeing the man which was healed standing with them, they could say nothing against it.

mightier Stephen. There is a light which the world cannot put out.—*J. O. Dykes*.

The man . . . healed standing with them—If not apprehended along with the apostles, (ver. 3,) the Sanhedrim being an open court, his presence may have been an expression of his faith and thankfulness, or he may have been summoned for examination.—*Canon Cook*. Great was the boldness of the man, that even in the judgment hall he has not left them.—*Chrysostom*. **They could say nothing**—That is, in denial of the fact of his healing. Little did this healed cripple imagine what weight he added to the apostle's testimony, or how the sight of him confounded all the enemies of the Lord Jesus. And little does the consistent Christian imagine to what degree he strengthens the hands of those who preach the Gospel.—*C. Simeon*.

Authorities to be Consulted.

The Church in the House, (W. Arnot.) The Apostolic Church, (P. Schaff.) The Preacher's Lantern, iv, 449. The Preacher, (London,) ii, 421; vi, 321. Sermon by J. C. Ryle, (Acts 4. 12.) Pulpit Analyst, v, 585. Foster's Cyclopaedia—ver. 4: 3381; ver. 10: 3162; ver. 12: 393, 709, 1067, 2925, 7210, 7648, 7650.

Root Thoughts.

Even the name of Jesus cannot carry every thing before it, for men are free and can resist its charms; men are prejudiced and may refuse its claims; men are base and may detect its purity.

It is a mighty name. Creeds may be sapped by it; ordinances annulled by it; institutions destroyed by it; and they who see its relations, truth, ministry, and aim, will sacrifice all for it; but, alas! men may be blinded and bound and benumbed by bigotry.

With such men antipathy expresses itself in bitter antagonism. They will ignore the evidence, however strong, and when the people are moved and the leaders must do something, if they cannot kill the worker, they will stop the work.

There is scarcely any end to the devices of Satan's intellect when Satan's hate is enkindled. Like their master are his emissaries.

The Jews seek to terrify the leaders of this new divine movement; put them where they cannot reach the people; place the leaders in antagonism with established institutions—Sanhedrim and council—and thus seek to bring them into contempt with the people; try to confuse them, and threaten them, but all this is of no avail.

The name of Jesus goes on its conquering way. Satan and his hosts cannot imprison words and spirit and memory and purpose. The light of the sun is too much for their chains and cells. In prison or out, Peter and John and all the apostles preach the same name.

Men without grammar or logic or learning, with simple facts and keen conviction, unflinching boldness and burning zeal, will say their say in a plain way, with a commanding power of truth, and with the unsystematized logic of facts, so that the most scholarly scholars are confounded and silenced. Facts are knuckles and swords and cannon.

Facts silence sophistries, baffle bravado, laugh to scorn false assumptions and authorities.

When the apostles shall see Christ as he is, they shall be like him; there will be transfiguring power in the vision. So they had seen Christ, and there was power, regenerative and heroic, in the sight.

The scribes and Pharisees and Sadducees had

also seen Jesus, but they had closed their hearts against him. They had feared him. They sought to destroy him. They had crucified and buried him, and sealed the stone of the sepulcher, and given him up, and laughed their malignant laugh of triumph.

But here he is again, and his name on the lips of the sanctified apostles is mightier, if possible, than his personal presence.

Practical Thoughts.

[THE NAME OF JESUS.]

1. The name of Jesus excites the wrath and fear of unbelievers and enemies. Vers. 1, 2.
2. The name of Jesus presents to man the only hope of resurrection from the dead. Ver. 2.
3. The name of Jesus has power to win believers, notwithstanding all the efforts of enemies. Ver. 4.
4. The name of Jesus brings a divine endowment upon those who uphold it. Ver. 8.
5. The name of Jesus is the inspiration of good deeds only, and not of evil. Ver. 9.
6. The name of Jesus has power through the very cross of its shame. Ver. 10.
7. The name of Jesus is made the name above every name in the face of those who have rejected it. Ver. 11.
8. The name of Jesus is the only name and the all-sufficient name of salvation to men. Ver. 12.
9. The name of Jesus has power to inspire courage and impart wisdom in testimony. Ver. 13.

A. D. 30.]

LESSON VII.

[Feb. 18.

CHRISTIAN COURAGE.—Acts 4. 13-31.

GOLDEN TEXT.—If God be for us, who can be against us?—ROM. 8. 31.

TIME.—A. D. 30.

PLACE.—Jerusalem.

CONNECTING LINK.—The discussion in the council after Peter's testimony. Acts 4. 15-17.

INTRODUCTION.—After the bold words of Peter before the council, the two apostles were led forth that the rulers might decide upon the course to pursue in regard to them. The question of the truth or falsehood of their utterances was not raised, but the sole thought of the council was as to the best method of quieting them, and preventing the growth of the new movement. They resolved to employ commands and threats. So, sending for the two disciples, without condescending to argue with them, they laid upon them strict orders not to proclaim or even to utter the name of Jesus; a command which was futile, for the apostles had counted the cost, and were resolved to obey God rather than man.

Authorized Version.

18 And they called them, and com-

18. They called them—The two apostles, Peter and John, were doubtless under guard in some place near at hand. Commanded them

Revised Version.

18 And they called them, and charged

[Rev. Ver., *charged them*].—Spoke to them with all the authority of the highest council in the nation. Not to speak . . . nor teach.—The

Authorized Version.

manded them not to speak at all nor teach in the name of Je'sus.

19 But Pe'ter and John answered and said unto them, ¹ Whether it be right in the sight of God to hearken unto you more than unto God, judge ye.

20 For ² we cannot but speak the things which ³ we have seen and heard.

¹ Chap. 5. 29; Gal. 1. 10.—² Chap. 1. 8; 2. 32.—³ Chap. 22. 15; 1 John 1. 1.

true distinction between these words is, that, while both verbs here refer to public speaking, the first relates more to the sound or utterance, the second to the matter uttered or the subject of discourse.—*J. A. Alexander.* **In the name of Jesus**—Literally, *upon the name of Jesus*; that is, so as to make *that name* the *subject* (basis) of their discoursing.—*Alford.* They were forbidden to speak his name as a power in working miracles, or to preach salvation through his name to the people.

19. **Peter and John answered**—The Holy Ghost suggested the same answer to both.—*Canon Cook.* Peter may have spoken as the voice of both apostles.—*H.* **Whether it be right . . . to hearken unto you**—Government is government, and law is law, only and so far as divinely authorized; but no human government and no human law is authorized by the divine law to contradict and annul the divine law. No doubt this principle may be misused by disorganizers; but that can make no difference as to the intrinsic truth of the rule itself.—*Whedon.* **More than unto God**—There must be an adequate authority or an adequate reason for disobedience to the human authority, which is binding until it is superseded by that which is higher than itself. And the *onus probandi* rests on the man who asserts the higher authority. Intensity of conviction may be enough for himself; but it cannot be expected that it will be so for others. In the absence of signs and wonders the question must be discussed on the wide ground of reason and of conscience; and the man who refuses to enter into debate on that ground because he is certain he is right, is *ipso facto* convicted of an almost insane egotism. In practice the difficulty rises in the question, "Is there the divine authority which is claimed?" And the only practical answer is to be found in the rule that men who believe they have the authority are bound to act as if they had it. If the Lord God hath spoken to them they can but prophecy, (Amos 8. 8.) In cases such as this, where the question is one of

Revised Version.

them not to speak at all nor teach in 19 the name of Je'sus. But Pe'ter and John answered and said unto them, Whether it be right in the sight of God to hearken unto you rather than 20 unto God, judge ye: for we cannot but speak the things which we saw 21 and heard. And they, when they

witness to facts, they must not tamper with the truth if they believe themselves commissioned by God to declare the facts, for fear of offending men. When they pass from facts to doctrines inferred from facts, from doctrines to opinions, from opinions to conjectures, the duty of not saying that which they do not believe remains the same, but there is not the same obligation to proclaim what they thus hold in various stages of assent.—*E. H. Plumptre.* **Judge ye**—The concluding words, "judge ye," admit of two interpretations, somewhat different in emphasis and force, if not in their essential import. One meaning, and perhaps the one most commonly attached to them, is, "You may judge for us; we are willing, in a case so clear, to abide by your decision." The other, and to my mind the most striking and impressive, is, "You may judge for yourselves and take the consequences of your own decision; but as for us, we cannot but speak, etc."—*J. A. Alexander.*

Said the Achæan ambassadors at Rome: "We indeed revere you, O Romans! and, if you so will, we tremble before you; but we more revere and tremble before the immortal gods." And Socrates is made by Plato to say: "I embrace and love you. O Athenians! but I obey God rather than you."—*Whedon.*

20. **For we**—This pronoun is strongly emphatic; *we*, whatever you may think fit to do.—*Canon Cook.* **Cannot but speak**—They cannot in consistency with their moral obligations or their own highest well-being. The two things being incompatible but one can be done. And to say that they cannot do one, is but a decisive way of saying that they have settled the point that they will do the other.—*Whedon.* **The things which we have seen and heard** [Rev. Ver., *saw and heard.*]—The courage to obey God rather than man proceeded from what had come under their own experience, from Christ's words, from his works, his life, his resurrection. But this outward experience could have inspired them with no such boldness if it had not aroused an inward experience; if it had not attached

Authorized Version.

21 So, when they had further threatened them, they let them go, finding nothing how they might punish them, because ⁴of the people: for all men glorified God for that ⁵which was done.

22 For the man was above forty years old on whom this miracle of healing was showed.

23 And being let go, ⁶they went to their own company, and reported all that the chief priests and elders had said unto them.

24 And when they heard that, they ⁷lifted up their voice to God with one

Revised Version.

had further threatened them, let them go, finding nothing how they might punish them, because of the people; for all men glorified God for

22 that which was done. For the man was more than forty years old, on whom this ¹miracle of healing was wrought.

23 And being let go, they came to their own company, and reported all that the chief priests and the elders had said unto them. And they, when they heard it, lifted up their

⁴ Matt. 21. 26; Luke 20. 6; 22. 2.—⁵ chap. 3. 7, 8.—⁶ Chap. 12. 12.—⁷ Psa. 103. 1; 107. 1.

¹ Gr. sign.

them to Christ as a Friend, a Master, a Saviour, and a King. The influences of things seen and heard within their souls and in their lives created their strength to endure, to resist, to hope on amid discouragements, to believe in the efficacy and the triumph of the Gospel.—*T. D. Woolsey.*

A minister without boldness is like a smooth file, a knife without an edge, a sentinel that is afraid to let off his gun. If men will be bold in sin, ministers must be bold to reprove.—*Gurnall.*

Bunyan with irresistible zeal preached throughout the country, especially in Bedfordshire and its neighborhood, until, on the restoration of Charles II., he was thrown into prison where he remained twelve years. During his confinement he preached to all to whom he could gain access; and when liberty was offered to him on condition of promising to abstain from preaching, he constantly replied, "If you let me out to-day, I shall preach again to-morrow."—*J. C. Gray.*

21. Let them go—Released them or discharged them, no doubt by a formal and judicial act, whereas the English version rather suggests the idea of informally allowing their escape.—*J. A. Alexander.* Finding nothing—They had no evidence on which they could proceed; and they could not devise any punishment which would not have exasperated the people.—*Canon Cook.* Not at a loss for a pretext, but at a loss how to do it so as not to rouse the opposition of the people.—*J. F. B.* All men glorified God—The tense implies continued action—were glorifying God. It is specially characteristic of Luke thus to note the impression made upon the people by signs and wonders, (Luke 2. 20; 4. 15; and in seven other passages).—*E. H. Plumptre.* The sense, of course, is that the feeling of the people was unanimous, not in affirming that Christianity is true against Judaism,

but that this Nazarenism is compatible with true Judaism.—*Whedon.*

22. Above forty years old—His age insured his case being generally known, and made the miracle the more remarkable.—*Canon Cook.* This precision in noting the duration of disease or infirmity is again characteristic of the writes. Compare the case of the woman with an issue of blood. Luke 8. 43; of Æneas, chap. 9. 33; of the cripple at Lystra, chap. 14. 8.—*E. H. Plumptre.* Was shewed [Rev. Ver., was wrought.]

23. Let go, they went to their own—From the meeting of the elders they turned gladly to the humble, yet more honorable, companionship of their fellow disciples. Like draws to like, and these men of God, when set free, drew toward those who were congenial with themselves. Their own company—The body of Christians at their own large assembly room.—*Whedon.* This may have been the "upper room" referred to in chap. i, 14. Chief priests—Strictly, the heads of the twenty-four courses of the priesthood, among whom the high-priest would be included; but, generally, the leaders among the priestly party.

24. When they heard . . . lifted up their voice—The reporting, at length, of this noble prayer, and the answer which came with outward sign, almost like the signs of Pentecost itself, show us how critical the moment was felt to be for the infant Church. It is true that the council had been so weak and inconsequential as not to enforce its decision for the present. Still, it had decided; and its decision against the new faith was a sore blow and grievous discouragement. It meant that any hope of a national recognition of Jesus' messiahship, by a formal reversal of the national judgment which condemned him, was in the meanwhile at an end.—

Authorized Version.

accord, and said, Lord, thou ^aart God, which hast made heaven, and earth, and the sea, and all that in them is:

25 Who by the mouth of thy servant Da'vid hast said, ^aWhy did the heathen rage, and the people imagine vain things?

26 The kings of the earth stood up, and the rulers were gathered together against the Lord, and against his Christ.

27 For of a truth against ¹⁰thy holy child Je'sus, ¹¹whom thou hast anointed, both Her'od and Pon'ti-us Pi'l'ate, with the Gen'tiles, and the people of Is'ra-el, were gathered together,

Revised Version.

voice to God with one accord, and said, O ²Lord, ³thou that didst make the heaven and the earth and the sea, and all that in them is: 'who by the Holy Ghost, *by* the mouth of our father Da'vid thy servant, didst say,

Why did the Gen'tiles rage,
And the peoples ^aimagine vain things?

26 The kings of the earth set themselves in array,
And the rulers were gathered together,
Against the Lord, and against his ^aAnointed:

27 for of a truth in this city against thy holy Servant Je'sus, whom thou didst anoint, both Her'od and Pon'ti-us Pi'l'ate, with the Gen'tiles and the peo-

^a Exod. 20. 11; Jer. 32. 17.—⁹ Psa. 2. 1.—¹⁰ Heb. 7. 26.—
¹¹ Isa. 61. 1; John 10. 36.

² Or, Master.—³ Or, thou art he that did make.—⁴ The Greek text in this clause is somewhat uncertain.—⁵ Or, meditate.—
⁶ Gr. Christ.

J. O. Dykes. With one accord—This was their common prayer. Not that they all at once broke out into this utterance together, but that, uttered by some leading voice, it was in heart the prayer of all.—*Whedon.* Lord, thou art God—It is an acknowledgment that it was the same God, who was now doing these things, that had beforetime prophesied them of Christ.—*Alford.* The word here translated Lord is not the usual one employed to address God. It is here a word which means master, and denotes absolute power, a rule which is unlimited. The disciples rejoiced in the consciousness that they were in the hands of omnipotence. Which hast made heaven—The hymn has the special interest of being the earliest recorded utterance of the praises of the Christian Church. As such it is significant that it begins, as so many of the psalms begin, with setting forth the glory of God as the Creator, and rises from that to the higher redemptive work.—*E. H. Plumptre.*

25, 26. Who by the mouth—The Revised Version here has *Who by the Holy Ghost by the mouth of our father David thy servant, didst say.* The margin informs us that the Greek text here is somewhat uncertain. Of thy servant David (Psa. ii)—In that psalm a son of God is endowed, as King upon Zion, with the empire of the world. The image is borrowed from David's own, or perhaps Solomon's, coronation, but enlarged to a superhuman magnitude. The psalm was applied by the Jewish Church to the

Messiah, and is in good proof that other psalms do, under the image of David, shadow forth a far greater than David.—*Whedon.* Why did the heathen rage—The word for "rage" is primarily applied to animal ferocity, especially to that of untamed horses—*E. H. Plumptre.* Vain things—Literally, "empty things," plans which came to nought, endeavors which fail. Kings of the earth stood up—Stood opposed to the Messiah, and aiming to subvert his power. The Lord and his Christ, is, in the Hebrew, *Jehovah and his Messiah.* Christ, from the verb to anoint, is used in the classics only as an adjective, and only of the substance so applied. Its higher sense and personal application are peculiar to the Hellenistic Greek. The Septuagint constantly employs it to translate the Hebrew for anointed.—*J. A. Alexander.*

27. For of a truth—The best ancient copies read, [as in Revised Version,] after "were gathered together," *in this city, which probably answers to "upon my holy hill of Zion,"* in the psalm.—*J. F. B.* Thy holy child [Rev. Ver., servant] Jesus—The appellation here given to our Lord is not "child," but servant, as before, chap. iii, 26. Jesus, the servant of Jehovah, is the antitype and completion of David, and of all other servants of the Lord: what is said of them only partially and hyperbolically is said literally and entirely of him.—*Alford.* Whom thou hast anointed—As if he had said, "Whom thou didst consecrate by unction to the office of

Authorized Version.

28 For ¹² to do whatsoever thy hand and thy counsel determined before to be done.

29 And now, Lord, behold their threatenings: and grant unto thy servants, ¹³ that with all boldness they may speak thy word,

30 By stretching forth thine hand to heal; and ¹⁴ that signs and wonders may

¹² Chap. 2, 23.—¹³ Isa. 55, 1; Ezek. 2, 6; chap. 19, 5; Eph. 6, 19; 2 Thess. 3, 1.—¹⁴ Chap. 5, 12.

a prophet, priest, and king, and who is—therefore the Anointed One foretold in this and other ancient scriptures.”—*J. A. Alexander*. Both Herod and Pontius Pilate—The main idea here is, that the prophecy had been fulfilled in its widest sense, for the nations had combined against the Christ, both Jews and Gentiles. Some suppose Herod to be mentioned as belonging to the latter, on account of his Idumean lineage and irreligious character. It seems more natural, however, to regard him as the representative of Israel, at least in this affair, as Pilate represents the Roman Empire or the Gentiles.—*J. A. Alexander*.

In what spirit should the Christian mention his enemies in prayer? (1) Without fear or dread; for he prays to the King of all kings. (2) Without wrath and hatred; for his prayers are directed against that which is evil; not against evil men. (3) Without pride and defiance; for he prays not so much with respect to his personal affairs as to the cause of God.—*C. Gerok*.

As frankincense, when it is put into the fire, giveth the greater perfume; as spice, if it be pounded and beaten, smelleth the sweeter; as the earth, when it is torn up by the plow, becometh more fruitful; the seed in the ground, after frost and snow and winter storms, springeth the ranker; the nigher the vine is pruned to the stock, the greater grape it yieldeth; the grape, when it is most pressed and beaten, maketh the sweetest wine; linen, when it is bucked and washed, wrung and beaten, is so made fairer and whiter; even so the children of God receive great benefit by persecution; for by it God washeth and scour-eth, schooleth and nurtureth, them, that so, through many tribulations, they may enter into their rest.—*Cawdray*.

28. For to do—There is an ellipsis in the thought between the verb *to do* and its object, *whatsoever*, etc.; “to do [as they thought, their own counsel; but really] *whatsoever thy hand and thy counsel determined*.—*Alford*. Thy hand—Thy overruling power and predisposing wisdom. God’s hand is often felt before his purpose is understood.—*Canon Cook*. Thy

Revised Version.

28 ples of Is-ra-el, were gathered together, to do whatsoever thy hand and thy counsel foreordained to come
29 to pass. And now, Lord, look upon their threatenings: and grant unto thy ⁷servants to speak thy word with
30 all boldness, while thou stretchest forth thy hand to heal; and that signs and wonders may be done

⁷ Gr. *doeuvrevants*.

counsel determined [Rev. Ver., *foreordained*.]—It is not said that God decreed, that Pilate, Herod, etc., should do what they did; but, at most, that they did what God had decreed to be done.—*P. Limborch*. In every fact of history, no less than in the great fact of which Peter speaks, the will of each agent is free, and he stands or falls by the part he has taken in it; and yet the outcome of the whole works out some law of evolution, some “increasing purpose,” which we recognize as we look back on the course of the events, the actors in which were impelled by their own base or noble aims, their self-interest or their self-devotion.—*E. H. Plumptre*. With all boldness they may speak—Amid the storm the Church prays not for the destruction of their foes, nor even for refuge or *protection*, but for *boldness*, or rather firm freedom in maintaining their sacred cause, It is a heroic martyr prayer.—*Whedon*.

29. Now, Lord, behold . . . and grant—No word or thought of vengeance against these malignant murderers and persecutors. Only *behold* thou, and interpose as thou wilt, and when thou wilt! And for *themselves*, they ask no immunity from further persecution or danger, only that their faith and courage may not fail, that they may hold on in their work of testifying for Christ and preaching the word.—*J. G. Butler*.

Silence is sin, if your cry might prevent a neighbor from stumbling over a precipice. Silence is sin, if neighbors are treading the broad path that leadeth to destruction, and your word might lead their steps into the way of life. Silence is sin, if a believing brother is sliding back, while your loving reproof might become to him a healing balm. Silence is sin, if a believing brother is oppressed with doubts and fears, while your lips might pour the consolations of God into his weary heart.—*W. Arnot*.

30. By stretching forth [Rev. Ver., *While thou stretchest forth*] thy hand to heal—The apostles, being *threatened*, do not imprecate, but beg assistance and God’s hand to be *stretched*

Authorized Version.

be done by ¹⁸ the name of thy holy child Je'sus.

³¹ And when they had prayed, the ¹⁸ place was shaken where they were assembled together; and they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and they spake the word of God with boldness.

¹⁸ Chap. 3. 6, 16. — ¹⁸ Chap. 2. 2, 4; 16. 26.

out, not to plague their enemies, but to heal, and to work helpful and beneficial miracles.—*Bishop Brownrig.* That signs and wonders [See note on verse 43, Lesson III.]—At no later period would the Church have laid such exclusive stress on this external aid of miracle. Long since have we outgrown it altogether, and learned to lean on the native, self-commending virtue of the gospel message, enforced to the heart by the inward virtue of the Holy Ghost. But just then, living in an atmosphere charged with the miraculous, and in a city accustomed to be fed on wonders, fresh, too, from a sudden cure which had added multitudes to their "company," the young Church asked, what under the circumstances was probably the best thing it could ask—a continuance of those special manifestations of divine might by which it had been founded and its witness at first authenticated.—*J. O. Dykes.* Holy child Jesus [Rev. Ver. *Holy servant Jesus*, as above, verse 27.]

³¹. When they had prayed—The prayer is given in substance in the previous verses. The place was shaken—As the first outpouring of the Spirit, so this special one, in answer to prayer was testified by an outward and visible sign; but not by the same sign, for that first baptism by the Holy Ghost, the great fulfillment of the promise, was not to be repeated. It was on every ground probable that the token of the special presence of God would be some phenomenon which would be recognized as such by those present.—*Alford.* They were all filled—According to Canon Cook, this was not a meeting of the entire Church, but of the apostles, and perhaps the original one hundred and twenty disciples. Acts 1. 15. But most expositors think that the entire body of believers were present, and all were endued with power. With the Holy Ghost—See note, Lesson II., ver. 4, and Lesson VI., ver. 8. Spake the word of God—Prayer-strengthened and Spirit-inspired, these men now speak words of faith and firmness which no human power can disturb. They are soon to feel the full trial of their dauntless spirit.

Whedon.

In some of the most delicate manufactures of

Revised Version.

31 through the name of thy holy Servant Je'sus. And when they had prayed, the place was shaken where-in they were gathered together; and they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and they spake the word of God with boldness.

this country the web, in a rude and unsightly state, enters a vessel filled with a certain liquid. passes slowly through, and emerges continuously at the opposite side. As it enters the cloth seems all of one color, and that one dim and unattractive; as it emerges it glitters in a variety of brilliant hues arranged in cunning figures, like a robe of needlework for the adornment of a queen. The liquid through which the fabric passes is composed of certain fiery, biting acids; and the reason why it is strained through such a bath is, that in the passage all the deforming and defiling things that have adhered to its surface in preceding processes may be discharged, and the figures, already secretly imprinted, may shine out in their beauty. Thus the disciples of Christ are in this life drawn through great tribulations, although the Lord, who loves them, has all power in heaven and in earth: nay, precisely because the Lord who loves them has all power in heaven and in earth, they are bathed in this sea of sorrows. It is not that this sea lies in their way, and that by a kind of geographical necessity they must go through it; rather, the Lord that bought them has provided that sea, and placed it across their path, that in its bitter waters the manifold incrustations that defile their beauty may be discharged ere they appear before the great white throne. Already, and by the ministry of the Spirit, the various features of their Redeemer's likeness have been secretly imprinted on their hearts; but these features have been so overlaid by manifold corruptions in actual life that the new nature can scarcely be recognized. Hence the necessity of providing a searching medium, and making even those who are "his workmanship" pass through it for their own good.—*W. Arnot.*

Authorities to be Consulted.

The Church in the House, (W. Arnot.) The Apostolic Church, (P. Schaff,) p. 532. Simeon's Horæ Homileticæ. Foster's Cyclopædia of Illustrations—verse 19: 2297, 5115; verse 25: 2865; verse 28: 11150; verse 29: 11127.

Root Thoughts.

What a picture of human impotency is presented by the council in their charge to the apostles not to speak at all nor teach in the name of Jesus. This is all the council did.

This is all that the council dare do, for they were afraid; afraid of a few plain fishermen; afraid of a few uncomfortable and unanswerable facts; afraid of the people—the ignorant, impotent people; ignorant and impotent because of their unfaithfulness as teachers of the mysteries of God.

The council delivered a formal charge, which Peter at once dashes to atoms by a bit of logic they are not able to meet.

See the victorious apostles. Under the charge and threat of the council, but with no promise on their part to heed it; indeed with a virtual declaration that they will not heed it, they march out of doors opened for them by the power that had arrested them, a power that would, but for the people, have murdered them. And from victory they march to victory. From the council they come to their own company, and commune with God.

They “went to their own company.” Like seeks like. Earthly to the earthly, the heavenly to the heavenly. This is the law of affinity every-where observed.

Coming to their own company, they are in one accord—with each other and with God. The assaults from without drive them into closer fellowship. The word is opened, and the heavens are opened. This is the law of divine converse among the saints—the open book, the open heaven. They do not base their expectation of the future on any boldness with which they have met the foe in the past; they know that grace is needed each day, and therefore they pray again “for all boldness.”

And the power came upon them. Brave indeed may ye be, O apostles of God, when the God of the heavens shakes the foundations of the earth!

What a symbol is here given of the trembling, rocking, falling foundations of Judaism!

What a symbol is here of the mighty energies of the Gospel because of the living God and the consecrated apostles!

And then came the answer—the Holy Ghost—power to speak the word with boldness.

Practical Thoughts.

[THE PERSECUTED CHURCH.]

1. The Church must expect to meet opposition and persecution from the world, whose spirit is against that of the gospel. Ver. 18.

2. The Church can escape persecution by being silent before the world, and bearing no testimony to Christ. Ver. 18.

3. The Church must deliver God's message, though forbidden by the powers of earth. Ver. 19.

4. The Church under persecution nevertheless enjoys the confidence and respect of men. Ver. 21.

5. The Church under persecution seeks the solace of Christian fellowship. Ver. 23.

6. The Church while persecuted finds great comfort in its God and in his word. Vers. 24, 25.

7. The Church rejoices in the privilege of sharing persecutions with its Lord. Ver. 27.

8. The Church in its persecutions recognizes the overruling hand of God and the fulfillment of his word. Ver. 28.

9. The Church in prayer seeks not freedom from persecution, but courage and fidelity under it. Ver. 29, 30.

10. The Church while persecuted enjoys special manifestations of the Spirit's presence. Ver. 31.

A. D. 30.]

LESSON VIII.

[Feb. 25.

ANANIAS AND SAPPHIRA.—Acts 5. 1-11.

GOLDEN TEXT.—Lying lips are an abomination to the Lord.—PROV. 12. 22.

TIME.—A. D. 30.

PLACE.—Jerusalem.

CONNECTING LINKS.—The liberality of Barnabas. Acts 5. 32-37.

INTRODUCTION.—The Spirit of light and love dwelling in this Pentecostal Church is also the Spirit of judgment. And, as the Spirit has now shown its power of love, so in this Church is the very place to show how severe its absolute standard of judgment is. And this is now done in the case of Ananias and Sapphira. The reason for this selection was to present and record at this *beginning* of the Christian Church a representative and memorial instance of the just doom of the *hypocrite*. The first Sabbath-breaker; and Achan, the appropriator of a Babylonish garment on the first entrance into Canaan; and Nadab and Abihu at the first founding of the priesthood, were punished with death at a *beginning*, with absolute justice. This was, in each case, a primordial token, and a declaration to all the future, what, if inflicted with exactness, the true deserts and punishments of the transgressor are. Such inflictions are at start the divine protest against the conclusion that God's future forbearance toward sin is any contradiction of the fatal desert of sin. They are examples hung up at the commencement, once for all that the wages of sin is death, a death which it is God's right at any moment to inflict.—Whedon.

Authorized Version.

1 But a certain man named An'a-ni'as, with Sap-phi'ra his wife, sold a possession,

2 And 'kept back *part* of the price, his wife also being privy to it, and

1 Josh. 7. 1; 1 Tim. 6. 10.

1. A certain man—Since both good and evil men are found in the visible Church, God has caused a record of good and evil examples to be made, the former being intended to edify, the latter to warn us.—*Quesnel*. Ananias, with Sapphira his wife—Ananias is the Greek form corresponding, in the Septuagint Version, both to *Hananiah* (Dan. 1. 6) and *Ananiah* (Neh. 3. 23,) which are more unlike in Hebrew than in English letters. Both were auspicious names, one denoting the favor, and the other the protection, of Jehovah, (see above on chap. 4. 6,) which accounts for the repeated occurrence of the Greek form, even in this history, as the name of different persons. The other name, which is variously written in the manuscripts, (Sappheira, Sapphira, Saphphira, Saphphura,) is commonly identified with the Hebrew and Greek words for a *sapphire*, (Exod. 24. 10; Rev. 21. 19,) but by some with an Aramaic adjective denoting fair or beautiful. In either case, the names (as Bengel hints) were too good for their owners.—J. A. Alexander.

But—The little word “but” is the hinge on which great issues turn. The door that swings on this sharp pivot opens and shuts the way of life. Sometimes, as here, it turns from light to darkness, and sometimes from darkness to light.

Revised Version.

5 But a certain man named An'a-ni'as, with Sap-phi'ra his wife, sold a pos-

2 session, and kept back *part* of the price, his wife also being privy to it,

In this case you are conducted from Barnabas to Ananias; you step from the bright sunshine of a loving Christian life to the grave-yard damp of a hollow hypocrisy.—*Arnot*.

2. Kept back part—The peculiar sin of this pair lay here, that, being tempted by two evil things, the love of money and the love of applause, they suffered both these unchristian passions to enter and occupy their souls, to fill them up bit by bit, driving out the love of men and the fear of God till, grown blind and hard and reckless through sin, they plotted in cold blood to cheat the Church and lie to the face of God. Had they been covetous only, they would have kept their property; vain only, they would have given it all. It was the effort to reconcile two conflicting passions, to be close and seem generous, to keep their gold and yet win the credit of giving it, which betrayed these Christians into the first open and shameful breach of Christian morality. Out of the confluence of covetousness with vanity came forth a lie.—J. O. Dykes. His wife also being privy to it—The repeated statement of the wife's complicity marks the sin as the result of previous deliberation and concert. Did they propose to obtain a place among those who, having given up all their property, were to be supported

Authorized Version.

brought a certain part, and laid it at the apostles' feet.

3 But ²Pe'ter said, An'a-ni'as, why hath Sa'tan ³filled thine heart ⁴to lie to the Holy Ghost, and to keep back *part* of the price of the land?

4 Whiles it remained, was it not thine own? and after it was sold, was it not

² Num. 30, 9; Dent. 23, 21; Eccl. 5, 4. — ³ Luke 22, 3; John 8, 44. — ⁴ Or, to deceive; Psa. 34, 7; Isa. 29, 15.

out of the common fund? Or, having low, carnal views of Christ's kingdom, did they hope to secure high position in it?—*Canon Cook*. It argues an extreme hardness of heart when two persons, united by the tenderest bond, plan a lie together and engage to support each other in carrying it out.—*Arnot*. Brought a certain part—Their aim was to get for themselves the credit of holy love and zeal by *one portion* of the price, whereas they had selfishly kept back the other portion for themselves. They wished to serve *two* masters, but to appear to serve only *one*.—*Meyer*. Besides deceit, Ananias and Sapphira were guilty of at least five other sins: (a) vanity; (b) hypocrisy; (c) selfishness; (d) avarice; (e) mistrust of God, for they were afraid to part with their means of sustenance.—*E. Stock*. Laid it at the apostles' feet—This was done in a solemn, formal act of devotion. It was probably done in public assembly, at the time of public worship, before the face of the congregation, and at the feet of the apostles who acted in the name and authority of Jesus Christ. These are the features of the act which made it so aggravated an offense against God and the Church, and which called for the severest punishment.—*Jacobus*.

Falsehood is never so successful as when she baits her hook with truth; and no opinions so fatally mislead us as those that are not wholly wrong, as no watches so effectually deceive as those that are sometimes right.—*Colton*.

It is too true, that the religious emotions may be much stirred, while the moral sense is not correspondingly quickened and purified. There may be much devotion of a certain kind where honesty or truth or purity is feebly rooted and liable to die out.—*Arnot*.

3. Peter said—Peter's share in the matter is not that of an originator or proper author of the death of the two sinners, but of a divinely required agent of God. By the extraordinary gift of the *discerning of spirits* he knows their secret sin; by the inspiration of the indwelling spirit he knows their doom; by the impulsive command of God he pronounces it.—

Revised Version.

and brought a certain part, and laid 3 it at the apostles' feet. But Pe'ter said, An'a-ni'as, why hath Sa'tan filled thy heart to ¹lie to the Holy Ghost, and to keep back *part* of the price of the land? Whiles it remained, did it not remain thine own? and after it was sold, was it not in thy power?

¹ Or, deceive.

Whedon. Why hath Satan filled thine heart—The question implies the power of resistance to Satan, and is equivalent to, *Why hast thou allowed Satan to fill*, etc.—*Alford*. It undeniably teaches, in the first place, the existence and the reality of Satan, that is of the evil spirit who is the prince of darkness, since it cannot possibly be imagined that the apostle merely spoke allegorically. The occasion was so grave, his language was so emphatic, and it refers so positively to facts, that mere figures of speech are entirely out of the question.—*Lechler*. What the Spirit of God doth in a saint, that, in a manner, doth Satan in a sinner. The Spirit *fills* the heart of his with love, joy, holy desires, fears; so Satan fills the sinner's heart with pride, lust, lying: and then, filled with Satan, as the drunkard with wine, he is not his own man, but Satan's slave.—*Gurnall*. To lie to the Holy Ghost—Dwelling not in Peter or the apostles alone, but in its fullness in the entire Church; so that the unhappy man walks into the very presence of infinite purity with a hypocrisy in his heart and a lie on his tongue.—*Whedon*. The sin of Ananias is so clearly and precisely said to have been that of lying to and trying to deceive the Holy Ghost, that it is strange men should ever have disputed whether it was sacrilege or avarice, ambition or vainglory. All these were undoubtedly included: but the grand specific charge against him, twice alleged by Peter, is that of lying to the Holy Ghost.—*J. A. Alexander*.

Satan knocked; Ananias opened his heart. Satan whispered; Ananias listened. Satan poured in the reasonings; Ananias did not shut the door, but let him do it. Satan suggested the thought and aroused the desire; Ananias could have refused but did not.—*S. S. Journal*.

4. While it remained—In the possession of Ananias, before he had sold it. Was it not thine own—To withhold or to give, according to its owner's will. After it was sold—He could have given the whole amount, or a portion, or none at all, as he might have chosen. There was no compulsion. These questions of Peter

Authorized Version.

in thine own power? why hast thou conceived this thing in thine heart? thou hast not lied unto men, but unto God.

5 And An'a-ni'as hearing these words ⁴fell down, and gave up the ghost: and great fear came on all them that heard these things.

6 And the young men arose, wound ⁵him up, and carried *him* out, and buried *him*.

⁴ Num. 14. 36.—⁵ John 19. 40.

show that the bestowment of goods was perfectly voluntary and not a law, and that the crime was a free and deliberate act in its successive stages.—*Whedon*. Conceived . . . in thine heart—Notice that although Satan had suggested it, and filled his heart, yet Ananias is regarded as wholly responsible for it, and as the author of the crime. Not . . . unto men, but unto God—In this and the preceding verse, taken together, we have incidentally a decisive proof of the Godhead of the Holy Ghost. Not only is the Divinity of the Holy Ghost taught here, but also his abiding presence in the Church, especially with the apostles. It has been observed that there was no exhortation to repentance, no hint of forgiveness; the power of retaining sin alone was exercised, because the sin was against the Holy Ghost, and unpardonable. Ananias and Sapphira had been under the Divine influence; must have witnessed apostolic miracles, and were in full communion with the Church.—*Canon Cook*.

5. Hearing these words—Not imprecatory, but announcing the Divine will. Gave up the ghost—This is an unhappy translation. The original means simply, *he expired*, or *he died*.—*Barnes*. We surely need not require any *justification* for this judicial sentence of the apostle, filling as he did at this time the highest place in the Church, and acting under the immediate prompting of the Holy Spirit. If such, however, be sought, we may remember that this was the first attempt made by Satan to obtain, by hypocrisy, a footing among Christ's flock: and that however, for wise reasons, this may since then have been permitted, it was absolutely necessary, in the infancy of the Church, that such attempt should be at once, and with severity, defeated.—*Alford*. It probably was the destruction of the flesh that the spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus, (1 Cor. 5. 5.) We do not, therefore, recognize this as a case of the sin against the Holy Ghost.—*Whedon*. That severity of punishment

Revised Version.

How is it that thou hast conceived this thing in thy heart? thou hast not 5 lied unto men, but unto God. And An'a-ni'as hearing these words fell down and gave up the ghost: and great fear came upon all that heard it.

6 And the ²young men arose and wrapped him round, and they carried him out and buried him.

² Gr. *younger*.

which was inflicted on them in the body *might* perhaps have been spared their souls.—*Bengel*. Great fear came—On those without the Christian circle: who, instead of disparaging the followers of the Lord Jesus, as they might otherwise have done on the discovery of such hypocrisy, were awed at the manifest presence of Divinity among them, and the mysterious power of throwing off such corrupt matter which rested upon the young Church.—*J. F. B*. The wonder is not that a liar should be struck dead, but that liars should be allowed by God to live. It becomes modern sinners not to cavil at Ananias' fate, but to wonder at the mercy of its not being their own.—*Whedon*.

Ananias dying with a lie on his lips, buoys a rock where many have have perished, and warns the wayfarer from the place of doom. The death of them that die may work for our good as much as the life of them that live. We may reap profit alike from the truth of the true and from the lie of the false.—*Arnot*.

6. The young men arose—The use of a different word in the original, (*the youths*, in verse 10,) as applying to these same persons, seems to decide that they were *merely the younger members* of the Church, acting, perhaps in accordance with Jewish custom; perhaps, also, on some hint given by Peter.—*Alford*. Their corporeal strength as young men occasioned their being the natural doers of the heavy work of the Church.—*Whedon*. Wound him up [Rev. Ver. *Wrapped him round*.]—By drawing his garments tightly around him. This would compose the limbs after any disorder into which they might have fallen under the stroke of sudden death.—*Canon Cook*. Carried him out—Beyond the limits of the city—no burials were allowed within the walls. Buried him—It was usual in Palestine to bury a corpse on the day of death. The heat of the climate, doubtless, had much to do with this custom; besides which, so far as the Jews were concerned, their law made any one unclean for seven

Authorized Version.

7 And it was about the space of three hours after, when his wife, not knowing what was done, came in.

8 And Pe'ter answered unto her, Tell me whether ye sold the land for so much? And she said, Yea, for so much.

9 Then Pe'ter said unto her, How is it that ye have agreed together to tempt the Spirit of the Lord? Behold, the feet of them which have buried thy husband are at the door, and shall carry thee out?

10 Then fell she down straightway at his feet, and yielded up the ghost: and the young men came in, and found her

¶ Deut. 6, 16; Matt. 4, 7; Luke 4, 12; 1 Cor. 10, 9.

days who touched a dead body, or who was even in a house where a dead body lay.—*J. M. Freeman.*

7. **Three hours after . . . his wife**—The woman, as the weaker vessel, had a longer space for repentance. Precious three hours.—*Bengel.* **Not knowing**—Little knows she that she has been for three hours a widow; that her husband lies a dishonored corpse in a shameful grave. Still less does she dream how brief her widowhood will be. Her heart is full and eager with the deadly sin.—*Whedon.* **Came in**—Expecting, perhaps, admiration and applause as the wife of another Barnabas.—*Canon Cook.*

8. **Answered**—Addressed to the doubt and misgiving caused by the non-appearance of her husband.—*Canon Cook.* Perhaps it simply means met her with language which was like a response to her coming in. **Tell me whether**—The woman he would fain save, for the man had been the author of the sin; he therefore gives her time to clear herself and opportunity of repentance.—*Chrysostom.* **Whether ye sold the land**—It had been in her power to save her husband by a word of warning protest. It was now in her power to clear her own conscience by confession. She misses the one opportunity as she had misused the other.—*E. H. Plumptre.* **Yea, for so much**—This word, spoken before her death, decisively proves that death to have been not a result merely of her detection, but a judicial infliction.—*Alford.*

A willful falsehood told is a cripple, not able to stand by itself without some to support it. It is easy to tell a lie; hard but to tell a lie.—*T. Fuller.*

9. **Ye have agreed together**—It is plain that this preconcert or conspiracy was viewed by the apostle as a serious aggravation of the sin

Revised Version.

7 And it was about the space of three hours after, when his wife, not knowing

8 ing what was done, came in. And Pe'ter answered unto her, Tell me whether ye sold the land for so much.

9 And she said, Yea, for so much. But Peter said unto her, How is it that ye have agreed together to tempt the Spirit of the Lord? behold, the feet of them which have buried thy husband are at the door, and they shall

10 carry thee out. And she fell down immediately at his feet, and gave up the ghost: and the young men came

committed; not only because each was bound to hinder or dissuade instead of helping and encouraging the other; but because this previous agreement showed the sin to be deliberate and presumptuous, and cut off all excuse or palliation that might otherwise have been derived from haste, ignorance, or inconsideration.—*J. A. Alexander.* **To tempt the Spirit**—To put to the test, to ascertain whether He dwelt in the apostles, and whether he was liable to be deceived. This language is more severe than that which had been addressed to her husband.—*Canon Cook.* The sin itself is here described as that of tempting God, *i. e.*, trying his patience, or putting to the test, and thereby impiously questioning, not merely his omniscience, but his veracity and power to punish.—*J. A. Alexander.* **The feet . . . are at the door**—Not that Peter heard the tread of the young men outside, (they were probably barefooted,) but it is an expression common in the poetical or lively description of the Hebrews, and indeed of all nations, (see Isa. 52. 7; Nah. 1. 15; Rom. 10. 15,) making the member whereby the person acts the actor. I take the words to mean, that the time was just at hand for their return. See James 5. 9. The space of three hours was not too long; they would have to carry the corpse to the burying-ground at a considerable distance from the city, and when there to dig a grave and bury it.—*Alford.*

Man never deceives himself so much as when he attempts to deceive God.—*Caryl.*

10. **Fell she down . . . at his feet**—There where she should have laid the whole price, and did not, she was herself laid, as it were, to make up the deficiency.—*M. Henry.* **Yielded up the ghost**—Rather, "died." **Carrying her forth, buried her**—The usual reason for delay-

Authorized Version.

dead, and carrying *her* forth, buried *her* by her husband.

11 And great fear came upon all the church, and upon as many as heard these things.

ing burial did not exist is this case. That reason is the propriety of ascertaining that the death has taken place before the body is interred. But here there was no doubt as to the fact. The apostles who presided at this awful scene must have known that both Ananias and Sapphira were dead.—*J. A. Alexander.*

Revised Version.

in and found her dead, and they carried her out and buried her by her husband. And great fear came upon the whole church, and upon all that heard these things.

all who heard of these things led them in part to draw near with reverence, in part to shrink back in awe.—*E. H. Plumptre.*

Authorities to be Consulted.

Bonar's Bible Thoughts and Themes, iii, 65. Topics for Teachers, ii, 196. Simeon's *Horæ Homileticæ*. Dr. S. Olin's Works, i, 417. Freeman's *Hand-Book of Bible Manners and Customs*, Nos. 822, 826. Preacher's Lantern, iv, 513. Foster's *Cyclopedia of Illustrations* (Figures marked with star refer to poetical illustrations)—*2410, 7446, 10845, 1510, 5688, 2987, 10214, 11802.

Root Thoughts.

We have before us in this sad lesson a selfish, childless, avaricious couple who crave both earth and heaven. We have such still living in our age. Ananias and Sapphira have their representatives on earth.

The forces of the kingdom were very vigorous in those days. The current poured forth from the heavens vigorously. The conditions were favorable; but the savor of life unto life may be the savor of death unto death. The power that produces the electric light will kill instantly the careless intermeddler with its mystery. Great power constructive is great power destructive.

When God comes so near the saints that their faces shine, and their places of prayer tremble, crime may well tremble, lest there be death in the life.

We know but little about the Spirit of God. For centuries the electric force has avoided the scrutiny and mastery of men. We know more of it now than we did ten years ago, and vastly more than was known one hundred years ago; but most of its power and possibility are still unread. We know but little of the Spirit of God. But we do know that he is holy and sensitive. Quench him not, grieve him not, lie not to him. The ark over which dwelt the Shekinah helped Moses; but was death to Nadab and Abihu. It is a terrible thing to profane the truth; to hold it in unrighteousness; to commingle in sacred



Interior of Rock Sepulcher.

In the market-place of the town of Devizes, in England, there is a tablet which records that near to the spot on which it is fixed a woman dropped down dead, having just uttered the words: "If I have got the half-crown, may God strike me dead!" and the coin was found firmly fixed in the hand of her corpse.—*W. M. Taylor.*

11. Great fear—A sense of awe, reverence, and dread. Came upon all the Church [Rev. Ver., *Upon the whole Church*.]—From the beginning till now the Christian Church is exposed to two distinct dangers: it is liable to be assailed from without, and to be corrupted from within. It is in danger from open enemies and from false friends. This spiritual body, like the natural, may be injured either by the stroke of an adversary or by poison mingled with its food.—*Arnot.* And upon as many as heard [Rev. Ver., *Upon all that heard*.]—The sudden startling death of Ananias and his wife naturally tended to give a new prominence to the society, the rulers of which were seen to be clothed with supernatural powers; and the fear that fell upon

services with deliberate sin, and a deliberate purpose to sin on the soul.

No human tongue can tell the terribleness of such events. The law of the divine holiness so expresses itself in this terrible disaster, that the Church then, and the Church always, may be reminded that there is vengeance, and that the Lord himself hath said, "Vengeance is mine."

Practical Thoughts.

[THE FIRST SIN IN THE CHURCH.]

1. Sin is found in the Church, even while in the freshness of its Pentecostal baptism and under apostolic care. Vers. 1, 2.

2. The first sin in the Church springs from the "love of money, the root of all evil." Ver. 2.

3. The first sin is fostered by the desire for

the praise of men, without the self-denial to merit it. Ver. 2.

4. The first sin shows that there may be a lie without the utterance of the lips. Ver. 3.

5. The first sin shows that even in the Church of Christ Satan may enter. Ver. 3.

6. The first sin shows that he who deceives God's Church, tempts the Spirit of God dwelling in the Church. Ver. 3.

7. The first sin shows that an act in itself not wicked may be made guilty by its intention. Ver. 4.

8. The first sin shows by its penalty how God hates sin among his own people. Ver. 5.

9. The first sin shows that the lengthening of time for repentance is often only an opportunity for hardening the heart. Vers. 7-10.

10. The first sin punished brings purity to the Church and respect for the Church from the world. Ver. 11.

A. D. 30.]

LESSON IX.

[March 4.

PERSECUTION RENEWED.—Acts 5. 17-32.

GOLDEN TEXT.—We ought to obey God rather than men.—ACTS 5. 27.

TIME.—A. D. 30, soon after the last lesson.

PLACE.—Jerusalem.

CONNECTING LINK.—Many miracles wrought by the apostles. Acts 5. 12-16.

INTRODUCTION.—As history grows larger, events open on us. In the first persecution (3. 1-4. 22) *two* apostles were arrested; and the Sanhedrim, from fear of the people, had dismissed them with a requirement of silence, which the apostles faithfully promised to disobey. So far from silence, the apostles persisted in miracles and preaching; and, after the terrible phenomenon of Ananias and Sapphira, they boldly ventured to hold assembly in Solomon's porch, to the awe of their adversaries, to the love of the people, and the rapid increase of the Church. The incensed Sadducean authorities now proceed to bolder measures. Spite of the people or of divine interference, and even of their want of authority to inflict capital punishment, they are ready to put the *entire twelve* apostles to death forthwith; and, even when cooled by the remonstrances of Gamaliel, heading the Pharisaic party, they cannot dismiss the apostles without inflicting upon them an ignominious chastisement.—*Whedon*.

Authorized Version.

17 Then the high priest rose up, and all they that were with him, (which is the sect of the Sad'du-ceeds,) and were filled with indignation,

¹ Chap. 4. 1, 2.—a Or, envy.

17. The high-priest—Probably Annas, already referred to. [See Lesson VI, verse 6, note.] *Rose up*—"Rose up" is not redundant, but implies *being excited* by the popularity of the apostles, and on that account commencing a course of action hostile to them.—*Alford*. Since the first abortive effort to arrest the progress of

Revised Version.

17 But the high priest rose up, and all they that were with him (which is the sect of the Sadducees,) and 18 they were filled with jealousy, and

the new religion (chap. 4. 18, 21, 31) the authorities would seem to have been passive or indifferent, but now aroused themselves again to action.—*J. A. Alexander*. They that were with him (See chap. 4. 18; 19. 38; 22. 9)—Not the members of the Sanhedrim, but the friends and kindred (chap. 4. 6) of the high-priest. See ver. 21.—

Authorized Version.

18 And ²laid their hands on the apostles, and put them in the common prison.

19 But ³the angel of the Lord by night opened the prison doors, and brought them forth, and said,

² Luke 21, 12.—³ Psa. 34, 7; Acts 12, 7; chap. 16, 26; Heb. 1, 14.

Alford. Those who were of one mind in belief and in hostility to the apostles and their converts.—*Canon Cook.* The sect of the Sadducees (See Lesson VI, ref. 1, note)—The prominence of the resurrection of Jesus in the teaching of the apostles now made the Sadducean high-priests their most determined opponents. The Pharisees, on the other hand, less exposed now than they had been before to the condemnation passed by our Lord on their unreality and perverted casuistry, were drawing off from those with whom they had for a time coalesced into a position at first of declared neutrality; then of secret sympathy; then, in many cases, of professed adherence, (chap. 15. 5.)—*E. H. Plumptre.* Filled with indignation [Rev. Ver. *jealousy*—The word is that which is elsewhere rendered “zeal,” or “envy.” Both meanings of the word were probably applicable here. There was “zeal” against the doctrine, “envy” of the popularity of the apostles.—*E. H. Plumptre.*

Never did any good work go on, with any hope of success, but it met with opposition; they that are bent to do mischief cannot be reconciled to them who make it their business to do good.—*M. Henry.*

18. The apostles—All were in Jerusalem at this time. There is nothing here or in the sequel to intimate how many were apprehended. Verse 29 has, with good reason, been thought to point to all the twelve.—*Canon Cook.* Put them in the common prison [Rev. Ver. *in public ward*—They were not merely kept in custody, but dealt with as common criminals, compelled to herd with ruffians and robbers and murderers.—*E. H. Plumptre.* This was treating them as if already convicted, and involved far more disgrace; but their Lord’s words (John 16. 2-4) had prepared them.—*Canon Cook.*

The “common prison,” corresponding to our jail, consists of a single room in the governor’s cellar, with a floor of earth, and one small window, where all manner of people, from the murderer to the insolent debtor, are promiscuously crowded together. The only furniture consists of a bench, always occupied by the strongest; the rest lie on the floor, or stand. We have visited prisons of this kind where we could only stand a few moments upon the threshold on account of the foul air. The keepers remain outside of the

Revised Version.

laid hands on the apostles, and put

19 them in public ward. But an angel of the Lord by night opened the prison doors, and brought them out,

door, (Acts 5. 23.) But the prisoners are not bound. They mostly find their own food; hence they beg for bread of any one they may chance to



Ancient Jail.

see from the window; and in the rare cases in which the prison is situated high, and adjoins a public thoroughfare, the prisoners let down strings, and sometimes little baskets, and beg the passers by to send them up food.—*H. J. Van Lennep.*

19. The angel of the Lord [Rev. Ver. *an angel*—Whose existence was denied by those who had imprisoned the apostles. The words spoken by him place their deliverance outside the circle of earthquakes, or any natural phenomenon.—*Canon Cook.* Brought them forth—It is asked, Of what use was this miracle, since the apostles were again forthwith surrendered to the Sanhedrim? To this Baumgarten well replies, In the miracle God showed that he left his servants to suffer for his cause, not because he is not able to serve Caiaphas as he did Ananias and Sapphira, deliver his apostles, and make Jesus Messiah triumphant over all by omnipotent miraculous power, but because he purposes to leave human agents to their own agency. And the result was, that though the apostles

Authorized Version.

20 Go, stand and speak in the temple to the people 'all the words of this life.

21 And when they heard *that*, they entered into the temple early in the morning, and taught. ⁶But the high priest came, and they that were with him, and called the council together, and all the senate of the children of Is'ra-el, and sent to the prison to have them brought.

22 But when the officers came, and found them not in the prison, they returned, and told,

23 Saying, The prison truly found we shut with all safety, and the keepers standing without before the doors: but when we had opened, we found no man within.

⁴ John 6. 68; 17. 3; 1 John 10. 11.—⁵ Chap. 4. 5, 6.

severely suffered, yet they rejoiced "that they were worthy to suffer shame for his name." Just so, we may add, Jesus, before surrendering himself to his apprehenders (John 18. 6) first struck them to the ground and then accepted their bonds.—*Whedon*. The marvelous deliverance was a sign, not without its influence on the subsequent decision of the council, and on the courage of the two apostles.—*E. H. Plumptre*.

No bars nor bolts are so strong that the Lord cannot open a passage for his servants. There are no sorrows so profound, no burdens so heavy, that the Lord cannot, in his own appointed time, give relief to the soul. But he who holds the key which opens the prison doors of his servants holds also the key of hell and death, yea, the key of heaven and eternal life.—*Brandt*.

20. Go, stand and speak.—Their angelic commission was not merely to talk, but to preach; not privately, but publicly; not in the streets, but in the temple; not to the rulers, but the people; not a part of the truth necessary to salvation, but *all the words of this life*.—*J. A. Alexander*. In the temple.—In the very citadel of the persecution, at the very spot of their arrest, on the very pedestal of their former address to the nation of old Israel.—*Whedon*. Words of this life.—By "this life" is meant, not the earthly life, for this had not been the theme of the apostles' preaching: nor the future life, merely, though in a sense both would be included; but the spiritual, and therefore immortal, life, the life which Jesus Christ came to bring to light.—*L. Abbott*.

The angel opened the prison and carried to the prisoners the Master's message that they should

Revised Version.

20 and said, Go ye and stand and speak in the temple to the people all the

21 words of this Life. And when they heard *this*, they entered into the temple about daybreak, and taught. But the high priest came, and they that were with him, and called the council together, and all the senate of the children of Is'ra-el, and sent to the prison-house to have them brought. But the officers that came found them not in the prison; and

23 they returned, and told, saying, The prison-house we found shut in all safety, and the keepers standing at the doors: but when we had opened, 24 we found no man within. Now

continue to preach the gospel; but the angel himself does not preach. You never find an angel calling on sinners to repent.—*Arnot*.

21. Entered into the temple early in the morning [Rev. Ver., *about daybreak*.]—During a great part of the year in Palestine the heat becomes oppressive soon after sunrise. Much of our Lord's teaching was given very early. John 8. 2. The morning sacrifice was offered precisely at sunrise. The synagogue service is now often held before the sun is above the Mount of Olives.—*Canon Cook*. The high-priest came.—To the ordinary session chamber in the temple on the south side of it; and therefore, if the apostles were teaching in *Solomon's porch*, (ver. 12,) not in their immediate vicinity. *Alford*. The council . . . and all the senate.—The former has been understood of the Sanhedrim, the latter of the elders, heads of families, men of great experience, who were summoned on occasions of special importance; "a council of laymen," (Selden.)—*Canon Cook*. It is best to understand the expression as pleonastic; "the Sanhedrim," that is the whole eldership of the children of Israel.—*P. J. Glog*.

22, 23. Officers.—Civil, not military officers; those attending on the Sanhedrim to execute its orders. The prison [Rev. Ver., *the prison-house*.]—Not the same word in the original as that in verse 18. There it means *guard-house*. The keepers standing without.—The supernatural agent had not only opened the prison doors and sent the apostles from prison to temple, but had again closed the prison, and all so quietly that the keepers tranquilly supposed that the prisoners were still in custody.—*Whedon*.

Authorized Version.

24 Now when the high priest ^a and the captain of the temple and the chief priests heard these things, they doubted of them whereunto this would grow.

25 Then came one and told them, saying, Behold, the men whom ye put in prison are standing in the temple, and teaching the people.

26 Then went the captain with the officers, and brought them without violence: ^b for they feared the people, lest they should have been stoned.

27 And when they had brought them, they set *them* before the council: and the high priest asked them,

28 Saying, ^c Did not we straitly com-

Revised Version.

when the captain of the temple and the chief priests heard these words, they were much perplexed concerning them whereunto this would grow.

25 And there came one and told them, Behold, the men whom ye put in the prison are in the temple standing and

26 teaching the people. Then went the captain with the officers, and brought them, *but* without violence; for they feared the people, lest they should

27 be stoned. And when they had brought them, they set them before the council. And the high priest

28 asked them, saying, We straitly charged you not to preach in this

^a Luke 22, 4; chap. 4, 1.—^b Matt. 14, 5; 21, 26.—^c Chap. 4, 18.

No man within—They were, therefore, the only prisoners, unless *prison* here means *ward*, or *cell*, or unless the others were set free at the same time.—*J. A. Alexander*. **Captain of the temple**—The Jewish commandant over the Jewish police guard who kept order on the temple ground.—*Whedon*. See Lesson VI, 1, note. **Chief-priests**—Heads of the twenty-four courses, and titular high-priests who had held office.—*Canon Cook*. **They doubted of them** [Rev. Ver., *were perplexed concerning them*.] This is the first symptom of anything like awe, or apprehension of the supernatural.—*Canon Cook*. **Of them**—According to most expositors, the word *them* here refers not to “these things,” but to the apostles, concerning whom the rulers were in perplexity and doubt. **Whereunto this would grow**—Literally, *what it might become*. The matter had already assumed a very supernatural shape; these men were reputed as possessing miraculous powers; and truly, if prison doors could not hold them, how was it possible to manage their case?—*Whedon*.

25, 26. **The men . . . are standing in the temple**—This fact demonstrated that they were not endeavoring to escape, and yet that they had no intention of yielding to the prohibition of the council.—*L. Abbott*. **The captain**—The officer in charge of the temple. See verse 24. **Brought them without violence**—Not by force, for the apostles submitted quietly to the order of the rulers as law-abiding citizens. **They feared the people**—This was a surprising change which had come over the people, considering the eagerness with which they had demanded the crucifixion of Christ. Probably the numerous blessings which the apostles had conferred by the healing of the sick, their disinter-

ested love toward each other, as displayed in the community of goods, as well as their recent deliverance out of prison, had combined to impress the multitude in their favor. The Pharisees, also, the popular faction, were for the present neutral. The lapse of a few months, however, gave another illustration of the proverbial fickleness of popular favor.—*P. J. Gloag*. The stoning, so often mentioned in the New Testament, is not mere pelting, as an act of popular violence, but an ancient theocratic expression of abhorrence for some act of blasphemy or treason to Jehovah. This form of capital punishment, for such it was, had been preferred to others in the law, because it made the death of the offender, not the act of a hated executioner, but that of all the people who were present, and especially of those who had acted as informers and witnesses. From this arose the peculiar Jewish custom of taking up stones to stone one, as a sort of testimony against him.—*J. A. Alexander*.

27, 28. **Set them before the council**—The Sanhedrim, which was now assembled, not in the city, as on the former occasion, (Lesson VI,) but in its meeting-place, the hall Gazith, in the temple, between the Court of Israel and that of the priests. **High-priest asked**—It was his office to examine all persons brought before the council. **Saying**—They ought to have enquired first “How did ye escape?” But, as if nothing had happened, they ask them, saying, etc.—*Chrysostom*. **In this name**—The high-priest will not name Jesus; Peter names and celebrates him.—*Bengel*. **With your doctrine**—Better, *with your teaching*, [as in Rev. Ver.,] both to keep up the connection with the previous clause, and because the word is taken, as in Matt. 7, 28, in its wider sense, and not in the

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mand you, that ye should not teach in this name? and, behold, ye have filled Je-ru'sa-lem with your doctrine, and intend to bring this man's blood upon us.

29 Then Pe'ter and the other apostles answered and said, "We ought to obey God rather than men."

30 The God of our fathers raised up Je'sus, whom ye slew and hanged on a tree.

31 Him hath God exalted with his right hand to be a Prince and a Saviour,

⁹ Chap. 2, 23; 3, 15; 7, 52.—¹⁰ Matt. 23, 35; 27, 25.—¹¹ Gal. 1, 10.—¹² Chap. 10, 39; Gal. 3, 13; 1 Pet. 2, 24.—¹³ Chap. 2, 33; Phil. 2, 8; Heb. 2, 10; 12, 2.—¹⁴ Isa. 9, 6; Ezek. 34, 24; Dan. 9, 26; chap. 3, 16; Rev. 1, 5.—¹⁵ Matt. 1, 21.

modern sense which attaches to "doctrine" as meaning a formulated opinion.—*E. H. Plumptre*. Bring this man's blood upon us—Not meaning that divine vengeance would come on them for the murder of Jesus; but with a stress on us—that the people would be incited to take vengeance on them, the Sanhedrim, for that murder.—*Alford*. A strange complaint to come from those who had at least stirred up the people to cry, "His blood be on us and on our children."—*E. H. Plumptre*.

29. Peter and the other apostles [Rev. Ver. omits other.].—Peter may have spoken for all, or these words may express the summary of their entire testimony. Answered and said—The address which follows is almost in the nature of a syllogism; its logic is unanswerable. (1) We ought to obey God rather than man; (2) Israel's God has raised and exalted Jesus, whom ye slew; (3) By direct commission, and by the impartation of the Holy Ghost, we are directed to bear witness of these truths.—*L. Abbott*. The whole is a perfect model of concise and ready eloquence, and of unanswerable logical coherence; and a notable fulfillment of the promise, "It shall be given you in that hour what ye shall speak." Matt. 10, 19.—*Alford*. Obey God rather than man [See note, Lesson VII, verse 19.].—This was in declaring that, though they might be magistrates of secular Israel, yet they were not authority in the present kingdom of God, the new theocracy. Caiaphas was no high-priest, for the only high-priest was at the right hand of God. The Sanhedrim were no judges in the new theocracy, for these twelve apostles, by them falsely judged, were now in spirit and in truth sitting upon twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of the true Israel.—*Whedon*.

Revised Version.

name: and behold, ye have filled Je-ru'sa-lem with your teaching, and intend to bring this man's blood

29 upon us. But Pe'ter and the apostles answered and said, We must obey

30 God rather than men. The God of our fathers raised up Je'sus, whom ye slew, hanging him on a tree.

31 Him did God exalt with his right hand to be a Prince and a Saviour,

¹ Or, at.

Luther spoke in a like spirit before the Diet of Worms: "I cannot choose but adhere to the word of God, which has possession of my conscience. . . . Here I take my stand, I cannot do otherwise: God be my helper. Amen."—*Canon Cook*.

30. The God of our fathers. See note, Lesson V, verse 18. Raised up Jesus—These confessors are most careful, in face of these Sadducees, to insert the doctrine of the resurrection of Jesus in their avowal.—*Whedon*. Dr. Gloag thinks that this does not refer, however, to the resurrection, but to the sending of Jesus to men. He was "raised up" as a teacher and Saviour. So it is said that God "raised up" prophets and kings. Ye slew—Slew by hanging; a Jewish form of expression, adopted from Deut. 21, 22, 23; comp. chap. 10, 39; Luke 23, 39. The use of this Jewish phrase was meant to indicate that the guilt rested on the Sanhedrim rather than on the Roman authorities.—*Canon Cook*. Hanged on a tree—The Greek word does indeed literally signify tree or wood; but it also signifies the perpendicular beam of a cross, and so the word might have been correctly rendered cross. The manner of death is described thus barely and ignominiously to waken compunction in the hearers, to whom the expression was well known as entailing curse and disgrace on the victim.—*Alford*.

31. With his right hand—This may be translated, as in the margin of Rev. Ver., At his right hand, to the place of honor and power. To be a Prince—See Lesson V, verse 13, note. As a Prince, Christ bestows repentance to Israel; as a Saviour, he gives forgiveness of sins.—*P. J. Gloag*. For to give—The preposition for, placed thus before an infinitive, has been so long disused in English as to have become

Authorized Version.

iour,¹⁶ for to give repentance to Is'ra-el, and forgiveness of sins.

32 And¹⁷ we are his witnesses of these things; and *so is* also the Holy Ghost, whom God hath given to them that obey him.

¹⁶ Eph. 1. 7; Col. 1. 14.—¹⁷ John 15. 26.

Revised Version.

for to give repentance to Is'ra-el, and 32 remission of sins. And we are witnesses² of these ³things; ⁴and *so is* the Holy Ghost, whom God hath given to them that obey him.

² Some ancient authorities add *in him*.—³ Gr. *sayings*.—

⁴ Some ancient authorities read *and God hath given the Holy Ghost to them that obey him*.

nearly vulgar; but it is strictly philosophical, and is a literal translation of the Greek itself. The infinitive being, in fact, the name of the action, has the nature of the noun, and so, with proper accuracy, would take a preposition before it.—*Whedon*. To give repentance—Not merely to give time for it or place for it, but to give the grace of repentance, that is, power and disposition to repent.—*J. A. Alexander*. It means that repentance itself is the gift of God, in the same sense as forgiveness is.—*P. J. Gloag*. No man can truly repent of sin unless the Spirit of God be bestowed upon him, and that Spirit is given as the result of the exaltation of Jesus. **Forgiveness of sins**—The word in the original is the same as that translated *remission* in Lesson III, verse 38, where see the note. The crucified Jesus stands at God's right hand as the one who alone can forgive sin.

32. **We are his witnesses**—The apostles spoke with all the authority of eye-witnesses, giving testimony to facts which they had seen and heard. See 1 John 1. 1-3, and notes, Lesson V, verse 15, and Lesson VII, verse 20. **Of these things**—Literally, *of these sayings*; of these things which we have said; the facts of the life, resurrection, and divine power of Jesus. **So is also the Holy Ghost**—Two classes of witnesses are mentioned as distinct from each other, the apostles and the Holy Ghost. By the witness of the Holy Ghost is meant, not so much his ruling in the apostles, or his being conferred on those who believe, but the miracles which the apostles performed through the power of the Holy Ghost, and which miracles were the divine credentials of their mission.—*P. J. Gloag*. The Spirit in the prophets was Christ's first witness; and the Spirit by miracles was the second; and the Spirit by renovation, sanctification, and illumination, and consolation, assimilating the soul to Christ and heaven, is the continual witness to all true believers.—*Baxter*. In the Scripture these same testimonies are conjoined; that of the apostles, holy men under the guidance and reminiscence of the Holy Spirit, faithfully and honestly reporting those things which

fall under human observation; and that of God the Spirit himself, testifying, through them, those loftier things which no human experience can assure, nor human imagination compass.—*Alford*. To them that obey him—He does not say, "To us," which might make an unreal distinction between the apostles and the then believers, and an implied exclusion of the hearers from this gift; but generally, to *all that obey him*, by this word recalling the opening of the speech, and binding all together. So that the sense of the whole is, "We are acting in obedience to God, and for the everlasting good of our common Israel; and otherwise we cannot do." And a solemn invitation is implied, "*Be ye obedient likewise*."—*Alford*.

Authorities to be Consulted.

Farrar's Life and Work of St. Paul, chap. vi. Freeman's Bible Manners and Customs, Nos. 685, 787. Pulpit Cyclopaedia, 345. Bonar's Bible Thoughts and Themes, iii, 70. Foster's Cyclopaedia of Illustrations, 4494, 41679, 7138, 2297, 4168, 10178, 598.

Root Thoughts.

Religious organizations dependent upon public support are specially sensitive to all innovations which diminish their financial income, their social power, and their professional influence. It was therefore natural that a movement like that of the early Christian Church would excite jealousy of sects, a resort to force, and a perplexity "whereunto this thing would grow."

There was especial sensitiveness because the teaching of the apostles charged the Jewish party with the blood of Christ. There was no hesitancy on the part of Peter in laying the charge where it belonged. He is bold as a lion. It is not the "old man" but the "new man" now. He speaks concise, cutting words, words that are like a sharp, two-edged sword, and the leaders are "cut to the heart, and are minded to slay them."

Here is human power against a divine movement. The facts in the case are perverted,

the authority which the council possessed is abused, but brave men stand by and hold their own.

But facts are hard things to fight. When the people believe them, and when the opponents cannot deny them; and when living witnesses stand by ready to seal their reiterations of what the people already accept with their own blood; and when in all and through all is the permeating, witnessing Holy Spirit, there is no resistance by argument, by persuasion, by policy. Only the prison or the sword can silence such testimony.

Christianity is a system of facts—undeniable, unanswerable facts—not done in a corner, not limited to Canaan, not confined to the first century, but historical, experimental, gradually multiplying facts, and never more real, never more numerous, never more fresh, never more convincing, never more effectual, than in the year of our Lord now closing.

Practical Thoughts.

[OBEDIENCE TO GOD.]

1. Those who obey God must expect to find enemies among the rulers of the world, and sometimes even among those who claim to rule over the Church. Ver. 17.
2. Those who obey God sometimes are found in prison among those who disobey law. Ver. 18.
3. Those who suffer from obedience to God may look for God's help, either in deliverance or strength. Ver. 19.
4. Obedience to God requires men to speak for God all the truth of God. Ver. 20.
5. Obedience to God secures, even with persecutions, the respect of men. Ver. 26.
6. Obedience to God requires bold testimony against the sins of men. Vers. 29-32.
7. Those who obey God enjoy the witness of the Holy Spirit to their testimony.

A. D. 35.]

LESSON X.

[March 11.]

THE SEVEN CHOSEN.—Acts 6. 1-15.

GOLDEN TEXT.—Seven men of honest report, full of the Holy Ghost and wisdom.—ACTS 6. 3.

TIME.—A. D. 35. There is some reason for supposing that the lesson embraces a period of two years. from 35 to 37 A. D.

PLACE.—Jerusalem.

CONNECTING LINK.—The advice of Gamaliel, and the release of the apostles. Acts 5. 33-42.

INTRODUCTION.—A few years of rapid and peaceful growth appear in the history of the Church. The believers are now numbered by thousands, and represent nearly all classes in the community, even many of the priests having given their adhesion to the new faith. But some of the inevitable results of popularity and increase are manifest. Parties have become developed in the Church, and opposing views are beginning to conflict. Already we can detect the germs of the impending struggle between the narrow Judaists and the more liberal Hellenists among the disciples, which is to end in the opening of the door of faith to the Gentile world. The abounding charity and the loose organization of the Pentecostal days have led, in some instances, to a neglect of the needy, but oftener, to the clamor of a throng of dependents fastened to the Church by the bestowal of bounty. There is danger of strife, which is averted by the magnanimity and wisdom of the Twelve, who have grown in judgment as well as in grace since the earlier days.—*Anon.* We have to think of a clamorous crowd of applicants besieging the house at which the apostles held their meeting at the times appointed for giving relief in money, or, as seems more probable, in kind. The Twelve, singly or in groups, sat at the table, and gave as they were able. It was like the dole of alms at the gate of a convent. Under such circumstances, jealousies and complaints were all but inevitable. The Twelve were all of them Galileans, and were suspected of favoring the widows of Palestine rather than those of the Dispersion. It was the first sign that the new society was outgrowing its primitive organization.—*E. H. Plumptre. The office of the Seven.*—A special exigency required special work, and officers were appointed for the purpose. The tenure of their office was not fixed, nor its permanence in the Church prescribed, nor its duties defined, nor was even a name given to it. Apparently the fact of the appointment is only mentioned to explain the preaching and martyrdom of Stephen, and the subsequent conversion of Paul. There is no reason whatever to suppose that it was intended for a precedent, still less for a law, to succeeding generations, and all endeavors to conform the modern to the ancient office are in vain, since the ancient office had no definite duties.—*L. Abbott.*

Authorized Version.

1 And in those days, ¹when the number of the disciples was multiplied, there arose a murmuring of the ²Gre'cians against the He'brews, because their widows were neglected ³in the daily ministration.

2 Then the twelve called the multitude of the disciples *unto them*, and said 'It is not reason that we should leave the word of God, and serve tables.

¹ Psa. 72. 16; Matt. 13. 31; chap. 4. 4. — ² Chap. 9. 29; 11. 20. — ³ Chap. 4. 35. — ⁴ Exod. 18. 17; 2 Tim. 2. 4.

1. In those days—A Hebrew phrase used in chap. 1. 15, to mark a period of a few days, and in Matt. 8. 1, to imply an indefinite number of years.—*Whedon*. It probably means here a few years. (See Time, etc., above.) **Was multiplied** [Rev. Ver., *Was multiplying*.]—Better, *were being multiplied*, as by an almost daily increase.—*E. H. Plumptre*. **Arose a murmuring**—The word "murmuring" indicates that it was a suppressed and whispered discontent. The apostles did not wait for a public outbreak, but acted on the first suggestion of difficulty.—*L. Abbott*. The more the Church increased in numbers the greater the diversity of its members, and the more liable did it become to internal dissensions.—*P. J. Gloag*. **Gre'cians** [Rev. Ver., *Grecian Jews*] . . . **Hebrews**—Three classes of persons are to be carefully distinguished in this earliest Christian history—the *Hebrews*, the *Proselytes*, and the *Grecians*, or *Hellenists*. The *first* were claimants of the real Hebrew blood, more or less pure, speaking mainly the vernacular Hebrew of the day, (the Aramaic or Syro-Chaldaic,) inclined to reside in or connect themselves with Palestine, and especially Jerusalem, and standard zealots for Moses and the law. The *second* were Gentiles who, tired of idolatry and polytheism, were glad to learn from Judaism the doctrine of one true and holy God. One class went only so far as to accept the monotheism and the so-called moral precepts of Noah without undergoing circumcision and the ritual of Moses; and, because thus stopping at the threshold, (or rather, perhaps, because they were strangers "within thy gates," Exod. 20. 10,) they were significantly named *Proselytes of the Gate*, while the receivers of the whole law were proudly styled *Proselytes of Righteousness*. The *Grecians*, *Grecising Jews*, or *Hellenists*, were Jews by birth and circumcision, who, born in a foreign land, spoke a foreign language, especially the Greek, and

Revised Version.

6 Now in these days, when the number of the disciples was multiplying, there arose a murmuring of the ¹Gre'cian Jews against the He'brews, because their widows were neglected in ²the daily ministration. And the twelve called the multitude of the disciples unto them, and said, It is not ³fit that we should forsake the word of ³God, and ²serve tables. ⁴Look ye out

¹ Gr. *Hellenists*. — ² Gr. *pleasing*. — ³ Or, *minister to tables*. — ⁴ Some ancient authorities read *But, brethren, look ye out from among you*.

were held by the pure Jews to be tinctured with Gentilism, and so defective in the perfectness of their Judaism. They were inclined to liberalism, except when prompted by emulation to become more Jewish than the Jews themselves.—*Whedon*. **Widows**—Very early a distinct class in the primitive Church. 1 Tim. 5. 8-16. Afterward the designation was extended to every form of female helplessness and desolation. Chrysostom spoke of three thousand widows as sustained by the Church at Antioch.—*Canon Cook*. **Were neglected**—This term, conveying the charge or complaint, does not necessarily imply ill-will, but only expresses the fact alleged, that they were passed by.—*Jacobus*. Those poor who could attend for themselves and represent their case, were served; but the *widows*, who required more searching out at their own houses, were overlooked.—*Alford*. **Ministration**—Greek *diaconia*, from which *deacon* and *diaconate* or *deaconship* are derived. But Scripture nowhere applies the official title *deacon* to these men, and Luke seems even to avoid so doing (chap. 21. 8) in calling Philip *one of the seven*.—*Whedon*.

When numbers increase in the Church, its moral strength and purity diminish in the same proportion.—*Quesnel*.

To overlook is human; to correct and improve apostolic and Christian. Even when devout men, like the apostles, faithfully perform the duties of their office, they cannot always prevent unfavorable remarks from being made.—*Starke*.

2. Then [Rev. Ver., *And*] the twelve called—The matter was evidently made a subject of consultation between them, and their action was concurrent.—*L. Abbott*. It is a point of prudence and godly carefulness in that they prevented the evil which began to arise without deferring the remedy.—*Culvin*. **The multitude of the disciples**—It is no more necessary to suppose that the entire number, five or six thou-

Authorized Version.

3 Wherefore, brethren, ^o look ye out among you seven men of honest report, full of the Holy Ghost and wisdom, whom we may appoint over this business.

4 But we ^o will give ourselves continually to prayer, and to the ministry of the word.

5 And the saying pleased the whole multitude : and they chose Ste'phen, a

⁵ Deut. 1. 13 ; 1 Tim. 3. 7.—⁶ Chap. 2. 42.

sand, attended, than that all the citizens attend every town meeting. It was a public gathering of the Church, to which all could come who were so inclined. The open court-yard of any of the large houses of Jerusalem would afford a convenient place of meeting.—*L. Abbott.* It is not reason [Rev. Ver., *It is not fit* ; margin, *pleasing*.]—The meaning of the original seems to be. It is not our choice to distribute the charities of the Church ; do you provide some one else to do it.—*L. Abbott.* Serve [Rev. Ver., margin, *Minister to*] tables—The word was used for the "tables" of money-changers, as in Matt. 21. 12 ; John 2. 15, and was, therefore, equally appropriate whether we think of the relief as being given in money or in kind.—*E. H. Plumptre.*

There is a hint here of the inexpediency of placing the secular properties of the Church in the hands of its ecclesiastics. Certainly the Church which does this is not apostolic.—*L. Abbott.*

3. Look ye out—They refer the matter to the aggregate body of believers, but themselves prescribe the mode of action ; thus applying and exemplifying two great principles of apostolic Church polity : the participation of the people in the government of the body, and its subordination to divinely constituted officers.—*J. A. Alexander.* Seven men—Though seven was a sacred number among the Jews, yet there does not appear to be any mystery intended here. Probably the seven men were to take each his day of service ; and then there would be a superintendent for these widows, etc., *each day of the week.*—*A. Clarke.* Of honest report [Rev. Ver., *of good report.*]—Literally, "testified to," that is, attested by report as good men ; men against whom were no evil rumors ; for reputation as well as character was needed in the administration of financial trusts of this nature. Full of the Holy Ghost—Not full of miraculous gifts, which would have been no qualification for the duties required, but *spiritually gifted* ; although on two of them miraculous power did

Revised Version.

therefore, brethren, from among you seven men of good report, full of the Spirit and of wisdom, whom we may

4 appoint over this business. But we will continue stedfastly in prayer, 5 and in the ministry of the word. And the saying pleased the whole multitude : and they chose Ste'phen, a man

rest.—*J. F. B.* The apostles, it is clear, did not limit their thoughts of the Spirit's working to prophecy and the gift of tongues. Wherever wisdom, charity, and kindness were requisite, there was need of a supernatural grace, raising men above prejudice and passion.—*E. H. Plumptre.* And wisdom—Purity alone does not suffice for Church work ; it must be mated to intellectual capacity.—*L. Abbott.* Whom we may appoint—The apostles being intrusted with the accumulated funds of the Church, reserved the right to confirm or reject the selection of the multitude.—*L. Abbott.*

4. We will give ourselves continually to [Rev. Ver., *continue steadfastly in*] prayer and the ministry—"Prayer" includes the public worship of the Church in all its various developments, as well as private prayer and intercession ; the "ministry of the word," all forms of teaching.—*E. H. Plumptre.* This appointment affords a model for the prevention of Church quarrels. The apostles do not chide the complainants ; nor wait till the quarrel assumes serious proportions ; nor answer the complainants with self-justification ; nor endeavor to allay the jealousy by rebuking it, or heal the schism by being leaders of either Greek or Hebrew party. They throw the responsibility on the Church ; turn over the administration largely to the complainants ; and give themselves with increased consecration to spiritual work.—*L. Abbott.*

Said Luther once, "I have so much work for to-day, that I do not see how I can do it without three hours in prayer."

Prayer is the noblest portion of the work, which no bishop can delegate to another, as being himself occupied in more important matters.—*Calvin.*

5. They chose—It is remarkable that of the names the entire seven are Greek, a uniformity which could not exist without a cause. Hebrews had often, indeed, Greek names. Of the twelve apostles, as their names appear in the Acts,

Authorized Version.

7 man full of faith and of the Holy Ghost,
 8 and Phil'ip, and Proch'o-rus, and Ni-
 ca'nor, and Ti'mon, and Par'me-nas,
 and Nic'o-las a proselyte of An'ti-och:

6 Whom they set before the apostles:
 and when 9 they had prayed, 10 they laid
 their hands on them.

7 And 11 the word of God increased;
 and the number of the disciples mul-
 tiplied in Je-ru'salem greatly; and a

7 Chap. 11. 24.—8 Chap. 8. 5; 21. 8.—9 Ps. 37. 5; Prov.
 16. 3; chap. 1. 24; Phil. 4. 6; Jude 20.—10 Chap. 8. 17; 9. 17;
 13. 3; 1 Tim. 4. 14; 5. 22; 2 Tim. 1. 6.—11 Col. 1. 5; 2 Tim. 3. 1.

four are Greek. From the uniformity here it is perhaps too much to infer with some that the whole seven were foreign Greekish Jews. We may infer that possibly the Church, magnanimously to the weaker party, chose Greekish Jews alone. Or, perhaps, three were Hebrews with Greek names, three were foreign Jews, and one *proselyte* through Judaism from the Gentiles.—*Whedon*. Stephen, a man full of faith—Stephen must be regarded as the immediate predecessor of him who took the most prominent part in the bringing about his martyrdom; he must be regarded as having been, in a far truer sense than Gamaliel himself, the teacher of Paul. Paul has indeed been called a "colossal Stephen;" but had the life of Stephen been prolonged—had he not been summoned, it may be, to yet loftier spheres of activity—we know not to what further heights of moral grandeur he might have attained. We possess but a single speech to show his intellect and inspiration, and we are suffered to catch but one glimpse of his life. His speech influenced the whole career of the greatest of the apostles, and his death is the earliest martyrdom.—*Farrar*. Philip [See Second Quarter, Lessons I and II, notes.]—The other five names are not again mentioned in the New Testament, and the men who bore them are unknown. Nicolas, a proselyte [See note on the proselytes, ver. 1.]—Nicolas is memorable as the first person not of the race of Abraham named as admitted to full membership in the Church. He may have sacrificed to Apollo, or taken part in the licentious festivals of the grove of Daphne. The word "proselyte" is taken in its full sense, as including the acceptance of circumcision and the ceremonial law. He was, in technical language, a proselyte of Righteousness, not of the Gate. Had it been otherwise, his conversion would have anticipated the lesson taught afterward by that of Cornelius. The name of Nicolas has been identified by an early

Revised Version.

full of faith and of the Holy Spirit,
 and Phil'ip, and Proch'o-rus, and Ni-
 ca'nor, and Ti'mon, and Par'me-nas,
 and Nic'o-las a proselyte of An'ti-och:

6 whom they set before the apostles:
 and when they had prayed, they laid
 their hands on them.

7 And the word of God increased;
 and the number of the disciples mul-
 tiplied in Je-ru'sa-lem exceedingly;

tradition as the founder of the sect of the Nicolaitanes condemned in Rev. 2. 6. He, it was said, taught men "to misuse the flesh." (Clem. Alex. *Strom.* iii, 4, p. 187; Euseb. *Hist.* 8. 29.) Some contended that he meant by this that it was to be subdued by a rigorous asceticism; others, that he held it to be a proof of spiritual progress to yield to sensuous impulses, and yet remain pure. The traditions are not of much value, and another interpretation of the name of the sect is now very generally adopted; but the fall of one of the Seven into the error of over-strained rigor, or a reaction from it, is not in itself inconceivable. In the New Testament we never come across his name again.—*E. H. Plumptre*. The fact that a Gentile like Nicolas should thus have been selected to fill an office so honorable and so responsible is one of the many indications which mark the gradual dawn of a new conception respecting the Kingdom of God.—*Farrar*.

6. When they had prayed.—Literally, "having prayed." The prayer was offered when the Seven were set apart for their office, as a recognition of dependence upon God, and a petition for a blessing to attend upon the men in their work. Laid their hands on them.—This is the first mention of the act in the New Testament. It had had an analogous meaning in the ritual of Israel, (Num. 27. 23,) in acts of blessing, (Gen. 48. 13, 14,) and the transmission of functions. Its primary symbolism would seem to be that of the concentration for a moment of all the spiritual energy of prayer upon him on whom men lay their hands; and so of the bestowal of any office for which spiritual gifts are required.—*E. H. Plumptre*.

7. The word of God increased.—The word of God is here an elliptical expression for its effect upon the minds of men, in the way of conviction and conversion, and its increase is the growth or enlargement of the Church. This in-

Authorized Version.

great company ¹² of the priests were obedient to the faith.

8 And Ste'phen, full of faith and power, did great wonders and miracles among the people.

9 Then there arose certain of the synagogue, which is called *the synagogue* of the Lib'er-tines, and Cy-re'ni-ans, and

¹² John 12, 42.

crease may have come in two ways: first, by allaying the incipient divisions in the Church itself, and thus removing one chief obstacle to its advancement; then by bringing into public view, and into contact with the foreign Jews especially, such men of their own kindred as the Seven must have been.—*J. A. Alexander.* A great company of the priests—The new fact may fairly be connected with the new teaching of Stephen. And the main feature of that teaching was an anticipation of what was afterward proclaimed more clearly by Paul, that the time for sacrifices had passed away, and that the law, as a whole, and the ritual of the temple in particular, were decaying and waxing old, and ready to vanish away. Heb. 8. 13. We might have thought this likely to repel the priests, and to rouse them to a fanatic frenzy. We find that it attracts them as nothing else had attracted. To them it may well have been that the daily round of a ritual of slaughtered victims and clouds of incense, the cutting up of the carcasses and the carriage of the offal, had become unspeakably wearisome. They felt how profitless it was to their own spiritual life, how little power there was in the blood of bulls and goats to take away sin. Heb. 10. 4.—*E. H. Plumptre.* The greater number of the priests were in deep poverty, oppressed by the heads of their order, and may have welcomed a relief from its wearisome burdens. Besides, there was a standing rivalry, approaching to enmity, between the priests and the scribes, and these latter being the open enemies of the gospel, the former were more likely to become its friends.—*H.*

8. And Stephen—Up to this time the preaching had been by Hebrews, and addressed to Hebrews. Stephen, a Grecian Jew, untrammelled by the prejudices from which none of the Twelve, not even Peter, (chap. 10. 14, 15,) were emancipated, saw more clearly, and proclaimed more fearlessly, the radical and revolutionary character of the new religion, and especially its fitness for and its free offer to all nations. This catholic character of his ministry is indicated in the charge preferred against him; it is demonstrated

Revised Version.

and a great company of the priests were obedient to the faith.

8 And Ste'phen, full of grace and power, wrought great wonders and 9 signs among the people. But there arose certain of them that were of the synagogue called *the synagogue* of the Lib'er-tines, and of the Cy-re'ni-

in the speech he delivered in his own defense; it explains the bitterness of the persecution by the Pharisees which followed; it led, in the providence of God, to the dispersion of the Church hitherto centered at Jerusalem, and the ministry of the word throughout Palestine; it prepared the way for the conversion of Paul.—*L. Abbott.* Full of faith [Rev. Ver., *grace*] and power—*Grace*, not faith, is the best reading. It is here divine grace, and includes faith as one of the chief graces or free gifts of God's spirit. *Power* is the divine power promised by Jesus Christ to his disciples in chap. 1. 8, as manifested by signs and miracles, and also in the boldness and effectiveness of Stephen's preaching.—*L. Abbott.* Wrought great wonders—This is the first instance of any *not an apostle* working signs and wonders. The power was perhaps conferred by the laying on of the apostles' hands; though, that having been for a special purpose merely, and the working miracles being a fulfillment of the promise (Mark 16. 17, 18) to *believers*, I should rather refer the power to the *eminence of Stephen's faith*.—*Alford.*

9. The synagogue—The synagogues were the ordinary places of assembly among the Jews for worship and religious teaching. They came into use only after the captivity, but were very numerous in the time of Christ. They were of different sizes, but always the same in shape, oblong, and so situated that the worshippers always had their faces toward Jerusalem. Which is called—The Talmudists tell us that there were four hundred and sixty, some of them say four hundred and eighty, synagogues in Jerusalem. It is very probable that many of these were built by Jews of particular countries for their own use.—*Biscoe.* The structure of the sentence makes it probable that the Libertines, the Cyrenians, and the Alexandrians, attended one synagogue, those of Cilicia and Asia another.—*E. H. Plumptre.* The Libertines were Jews who, having been taken prisoners and reduced to slavery, had afterward been emancipated, and had returned to their national land. They had been allowed by Augustus to settle in a

Authorized Version.

Al'ex-an'dri-ans, and of them of Ci-li'-ci-a and of A'si-a, disputing with Ste'-phen.

10 And ¹³they were not able to resist the wisdom and the spirit by which he spake.

11 Then ¹⁴they suborned men, which said, We have heard him speak blasphemous words against Mo'ses, and against God.

12 And they stirred up the people,

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ans, and of the Al'ex-an'dri-ans, and of them of Ci-li'-ci-a and A'si-a, disput-

10 ing with Ste'phen. And they were not able to withstand the wisdom and 11 the Spirit by which he spake. Then

they suborned men, which said, We have heard him speak blasphemous words against Mo'ses, and against 12 God. And they stirred up the peo-

¹² Exod. 4. 12; Isa. 54. 17; Luke 21. 15.—¹⁴ Matt. 26. 59.

part of Rome, and to follow their own religious customs, but were expelled by Tiberius, A.D. 19. It is a reasonable conjecture that of these exiles enough may have found their way to Jerusalem to organize a synagogue of their own; and, having suffered persecution for their own faith, would be foremost in opposition to the new doctrine, as one "against this holy place and the law."—*L. Abbott*. And **Cyrenians** [See note, Lesson II, ver. 10]—At Cyrene also, on the north coast of Africa, lying between Egypt and Carthage, there was a large Jewish population. Strabo, quoted by Josephus, describes them as a fourth of the whole.—*E. H. Plumptre*. To this synagogue may have belonged Simon, who bore the cross of Christ, (Mark 15. 21,) his two sons, and also Lucius, named in Acts 13. 1. The **Alexandrians** were from Alexandria, on the Mediterranean, twelve miles from the mouth of the Nile, a famous philosophical and literary center. A large number of Jews were planted there by the founder, Alexander the Great; they possessed equal rights with the Greek population, had a part of the city allotted to them, were governed by their own code of laws, and at the time of Christ constituted one third of the population of the city.—*L. Abbott*. Of them of **Cilicia**—Here we feel at once the interest of the name. The young Jew of Tarsus; the disciple of Gamaliel, could not fail to be among the leading members of this section of the second synagogue, exercising, in the fiery energy of his zeal, a dominant influence even over the others.—*E. H. Plumptre*. And of **Asia** [See note, Lesson II, ver. 9]—The word is taken, as throughout the New Testament, in its later and more restricted sense, as denoting the pro-consular province so called, including the old Lydia and Ionia, and having Ephesus as its capital. Later on in the history we find Jews of Asia prominent in their zeal for the sacredness of the temple. Chap. 21. 27.—*E. H. Plumptre*. Disput-

ing with **Stephen**—*With* does not necessarily imply that he entered into any pulpit debate or discussion with them. It is equally consistent with the account to suppose that he preached the truth affirmatively, and that they opposed, but could not successfully resist, him.—*L. Abbott*.

10. **The wisdom**—In respect to divine things, wisdom, i. e., knowledge, insight, deep understanding, is represented every-where as a divine gift, and includes the idea of practical illustrations and application, thus distinguished from theoretical knowledge.—*W. Robinson*. Stephen alone was charged with utterances of a disloyal tendency against the tenets of Pharisaism, and this is a proof how different was his preaching from that of the Twelve, and how much earlier he had arrived at the true appreciation of the words of Jesus respecting the extent and nature of his kingdom. That which, in the mind of a Peter, was still but a grain of mustard seed, sown in the soil of Judaism, had already grown, in the soul of Stephen, into a mighty tree.—*Farrar*. **Spirit**—Here meaning not only the vigor and power of natural ability, but the higher influence of the Holy Spirit. He spoke with wisdom, for he spoke by inspiration.

11. **Suborned men**—Induced men to give false or perverted testimony. **Speak blasphemous words**—*Blasphemy* under the Jewish law was any endeavor to turn away the allegiance of the people from the one true God. This was not only irreligion, but treason, and was punishable with death. The natural resource of bigotry when convicted of error is always the same; silenced by argument, it silences by persecution.—*L. Abbott*. **Against Moses**—Against the laws of Moses, as more definitely specified in verse 11.

12. **They stirred up**—By misrepresenting Stephen's utterances. **The people**—This is the first time that we read of the hostility of the people toward the disciples. Hitherto believers

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and the elders, and the scribes, and came upon him, and caught him, and brought him to the council,

13 And set up false witnesses, which said, This man ceaseth not to speak blasphemous words against this holy place, and the law:

14 For ¹⁵ we have heard him say, that this Je'sus of Naz'a-reth ¹⁶ shall destroy this place, and shall change the *cus-toms which Mo'ses delivered us.

15 And all that sat in the council,

¹⁵ Chap. 25. 8.—¹⁶ Dan. 9. 26.—^a Or, rites; Heb. 8. 13; 9. 10.

were in favor with the people; the apostles enjoyed a certain degree of popularity; the Phari-saic faction—the popular party—were at least neutral, if not favorably inclined; the great op-ponents of the Christians were the Sadducees. But now a change took place: the people be-came hostile. And the reason of this seems to be, that Christianity now came in contact with the Pharisees; Stephen, in particular, attacked Jewish legalism; the gospel displayed its anti-pharisaical side. The priests and scribes, who were chiefly Pharisees, were stirred up; the cry that the Mosaic religion itself was in danger, that this new sect was undermining the prin-ciples of Judaism, excited their hostility, and thus the popular party having become hostile, the people as a natural consequence became hostile also.—*P. J. Gloag.* The elders and the scribes—See notes, Lesson VI, verse 5. Came upon him—Suddenly, while teaching. To the council—The Sanhedrim. See notes, Lesson VI, verse 5, and Lesson IX, verse 21. The chief priests were also members of the San-hedrim; they are not mentioned here, perhaps, because they were principally Sadducees, and this persecution was instigated by the Phari-sees.—*L. Abbott.*

13, 14. False witnesses—Not in the sense of mere inventors, fabricators, or gross liars, but in that of unfair and perverse reporters, who, even in repeating what he really had said, distorted it, and caused it to produce a false impression.—*J. A. Alexander.* Against this holy place—The temple, within a room of which the Sanhedrim were even then assembled. And the law—There were five things of which Stephen is charged with blasphemously predicting a change, namely, *Moses, Jehovah*, (Moses taking precedence in their talk,) *this holy place*, (the temple and perhaps city,) *the law*, (place takes precedence of law with them,) and the *customs*, or entire body of ritual observances.—*Whedon.*

Revised Version.

ple, and the elders, and the scribes, and came upon him, and seized him, and brought him into the council.
13 and set up false witnesses, which said, This man ceaseth not to speak words against this holy place, and
14 the law: for we have heard him say, that this Je'sus of Naz'a-reth shall destroy this place, and shall change the customs which Mo'ses delivered
15 unto us. And all that sat in the council, fastening their eyes on him,

This Jesus of Nazareth—A term of contempt. **Destroy this place**—Jesus had said that both city and temple were destined to destruction, and his words were fulfilled in about thirty years after the martyrdom of Stephen, and during the lifetime of some who took part in it. **Change the customs**—The entire ritual and system of the Mosaic institutions, whose work of education had been finished, and whose re-sults were soon to be merged in the institutions of the Christian Church. **Which Moses de-livered**—The truth at the bottom of this charge was probably Stephen's opposition to the Phari-sees' over-valuation of the ceremonial law and the temple, and his reference to the overthrow of the old economy of salvation. His views on these points he might have derived from our Lord's prophecy respecting the destruction and rebuilding of the temple, (John 2. 19,) and the cessation of all national worship confined to a particular place, be it Gerizim or Jerusalem. John 3. 21-24. But it was a calumny when his enemies accused him, on this account, of blas-pheming Moses and God; for the whole Old Testament itself points beyond itself to Chris-tianity as the fulfilling of the law and the prophets.—*Schaff.*

The blackest kind of a lie is that which is half true, for it cannot be squarely met with a denial, and sows doubt which no explanations will root up.

There may be false witnesses who, by their spirit rather than by their words, create an un-just impression.

15. All that sat in the council—Perhaps one of those present was the fiery young Phari-see, Saul of Tarsus, and it may be his recollec-tion of that scene, as given to Luke, that we are reading. Paul could never have forgotten that look of the angel-face. **Looking steadfastly on him** [Rev. Ver., *Fastening their eyes.*]—His position as the accused was in the middle, with

Authorized Version.

looking stedfastly on him, saw his face as it had been the face of ¹⁷ an angel.

¹⁷ Matt. 28, 3.

the council in a semicircle before him. His face as it had been the face of an angel—Whether here the shining was a supernatural brightness, a special and divine radiance, or a natural effect of his own divinely-inspired peace and joy, is not an important question. In either case it was the direct result of the indwelling of God with him, the fulfillment of the promise of Christ. John 14. 23, 27. That the manifestation of this inward life was not without its effect on the council is indicated by the mildness of the high-priest's question, in striking contrast with the high-priest's treatment of Christ (Matt. 26. 62, 63, 65) and Paul, (chap. 23. 2;) and by the fact that the council heard Stephen's defense until his outburst of indignation at the close.—*L. Abbott.* The judges, when they saw his glorified countenance, might have remembered the shining on the face of Moses, and trembled lest Stephen's voice should be about to speak the will of Jehovah, like that of the great lawgiver. Instead of being occupied with the faded glories of the second temple, they might have recognized in the spectacle before them the Shekinah of the Christian soul, which is the living sanctuary of God.—*J. S. Howson.*

There is, yea there is, in faces full of spiritual grace that which is lovely to those that love them, and strikes awe and fear into those that hate them.—*Chrysostom.*

A joyful heart, which is assured of the grace of God, imparts its brightness to the face.—*Starke.*

The flight of the eagles of God is boldest when the storm rages most furiously; his stars shine most brilliantly in the darkest nights.—*W. Hoffacker.*

God often sends angels to his Church; few there are who have eyes to see them, but there are many whose hands are ready to stone them.—*Starke.*

Authorities to be Consulted.

Bible Studies, (E. H. Plumptre,) p. 348. Preacher's Lantern, iv, 641. Chalmers' Sermons. Pulpit Cyclopaedia, 510, 511. Schaff's History of the Apostolic Church, p. 211. The Beginnings of Christianity, (Professor Fisher,) chap. 15. Farrar's St. Paul, chaps. vii, viii. Conybeare & Howson's St. Paul, chap. ii. Foster's Cyclopaedia of Illustrations—ver. 3: 7451; ver. 4: 5609, 11142; ver. 5: 9554.

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saw his face as it had been the face of an angel.

Root Thoughts.

However divine the aim of a human movement may be, the simple fact that human interests are involved is sufficient to account for neglects and unwisdom, for prejudices and uncharity. The more earthly the conditions and demands, the more unworthy and belittling the troubles that spring up.

Divided interests arising from diverse nationalities, over-exactions from people who demand sympathy, carelessness and unbusinesslike ways in conducting temporal and financial affairs; these and the like things will cause distractions in the Church.

Evil spirits who "fill the air and darken heaven" feast on such misunderstandings and alienations. They take delight in adding fuel to these infernal fires in the way of injected suspicions and doubts and insinuations. Satan flourishes when saints fight.

Here it is that wisdom and love foil the enemy. The early Church, in the fullness of its love, set a good example to the Church for all time: (1) It began in time to correct the evil; (2) It allowed perfect frankness in the statement of difficulties; (3) It pointed promptly by the division of labor; (4) It left the ministry free to devote itself exclusively to the spiritual part of the word; (5) It assigned the secular side of the work to spiritual men; (6) It made its selection with carefulness and prayer, and in due form.

Ministers may be excused from secular duties, but laymen, to whom such duties are assigned, must be devout and spiritually minded men. They are thus qualified for both departments of service. The overflow of energy not demanded in the service of tables may find full sweep in the teaching and preaching of the gospel.

Glorious Stephen! Early called, early consecrated, early crowned. He had the grip of a giant, the thought of a philosopher, the love of a saint, the face of an angel.

Practical Thoughts.

[DISSENSIONS IN THE CHURCH.]

1. Even in the pentecostal Church, baptized with the Holy Ghost, and led by the inspired apostles, there were dissensions and murmurings. Ver. 1.

2. Dissensions are apt to arise in the Church when a rapid increase brings in varied elements. Ver. 1.

3. Dissensions are apt to arise over financial questions, especially in the disbursement of Church money and the aid to the poor. Ver. 1.

4. Complaints threatening dissensions should be met in the spirit of kindness, conciliation and justice, and not in the spirit of opposition. Vers. 2, 3.

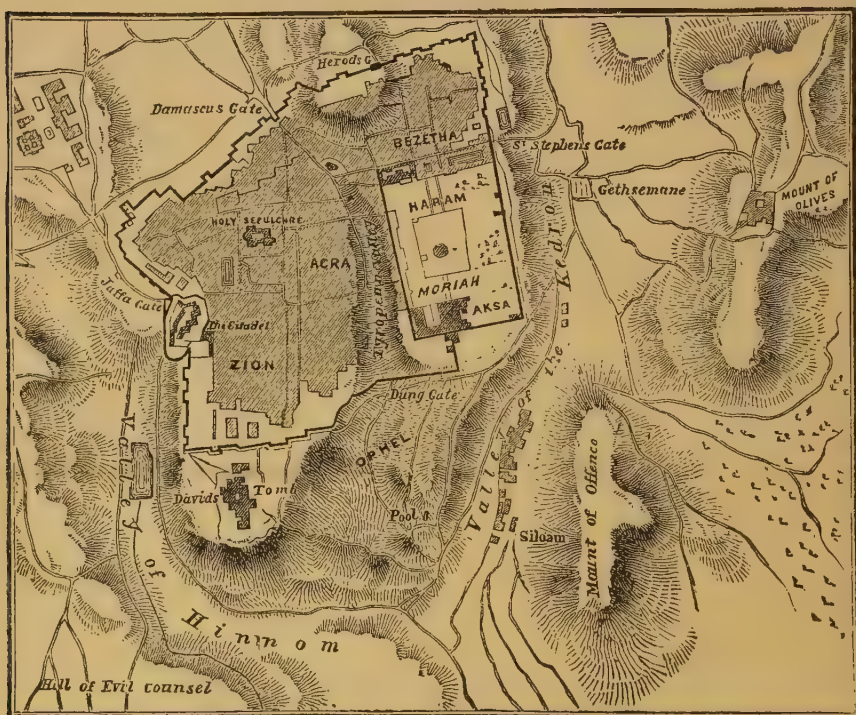
5. Dissensions may be often avoided when the ministry and the laity each have their place in

the supervision and work of the Church, the one spiritual and the other secular. Ver. 34.

6. Dissensions may be avoided when the secular interests of the Church are in the hands of men of earnest spirituality, good reputation, and wisdom in administration. Vers. 3, 4.

7. When dissensions are healed the progress of the Church is made more rapid, and its power is greatly increased. Ver. 7.

8. The Church needs to have its dissensions removed, that it may be able to face the opposition and hate of the world. Vers. 9-15.



Plan of Jerusalem.

A. D. 37.]

LESSON XI.

[March 18.

THE FIRST CHRISTIAN MARTYR.—Acts 7. 54-60 and 8. 1-4.

GOLDEN TEXT.—Be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life.—REV. 2. 10.

TIME.—A. D. 37, seven years after the crucifixion of Jesus.

PLACE.—Jerusalem, and the land of Palestine.

CONNECTING LINK.—Stephen's address. Acts 7. 1-53.

INTRODUCTION.—*The address of Stephen.*—It is to be observed that this speech of Stephen is an unfinished production. He was interrupted before he came to the conclusion. He had only entered upon

the principal part of his discourse—his testimony to Jesus as the Messiah. It is, indeed, an apology or defense against the accusations with which he was charged. He shows that, so far from being a blasphemer of Moses, he honored him as the prophet of God and the redeemer of Israel; and so far from attacking the temple, he regarded both it and the tabernacle as divine institutions. At the same time he shows that what God requires is obedience and spiritual worship, and not mere reliance on outward privileges. But at the same time he attacks the legalism and unbelief of the Pharisees. In citing the examples of the rejection of Joseph and Moses by their fathers, he indirectly points to the rejection of Jesus; in recounting the obstinacies of their forefathers, he describes in a figure the unbelief and rebellion of his hearers; and in that portion of his speech where his enemies interrupt him, he fearlessly attacks their obstinacy and resistance of the Holy Ghost, and, like Peter, charges them with being the betrayers and murderers of their Messiah. Stephen probably adopted the form of a historical narrative, in order to veil for a time his attack on Jewish legalism, so that he might secure the attention of his hearers.—*P. J. Gloag. Results of Stephen's martyrdom.*—The death of Stephen marks a transition in the history of the Church. Henceforth the sacred narrative describes the diffusion of the Gospel throughout the Gentile world. The initiation of this movement is due to the persecution inaugurated by the martyrdom of Stephen; it begins by the preaching of the Gospel in Samaria; it is carried on without the apostles, chiefly by the Greek converts; it receives a new impulse in the conversion of Saul; it is directly sanctioned by the divine vision vouchsafed to Peter, and the commission given to him, (chaps. 10. 11;) and it is finally adopted as the doctrine and policy of the Christian Church, by the commission of Paul and Barnabas as missionaries to the Gentiles, (chap. 13. 1-3).—*L. Abbott. The early life of Saul.*—It will be convenient, on this his first appearance, to put together the chief facts of his life up to this period. He was of the tribe of Benjamin, (Phil. 3. 5.) and had been named after its great hero-king. His father had obtained, perhaps as a freedman after a time of slavery at Rome, the privilege of Roman citizenship, (chap. 22. 28.) He had settled at Tarsus. The absence of any reference to him or to the apostle's mother makes it probable that they were both dead before he appears on the scene. At Tarsus the boy would probably receive a two-fold education, instructed at home in the Holy Scriptures daily and in Greek literature and philosophy in the schools for which the city was famous. At twelve he would become a child of the law, (see Luke 2. 42.) and showing great devotion to the studies which thus opened on him, was probably dedicated by his parents to the calling of a scribe. This, however, did not involve the abandonment of secular occupation; and after some years spent in Jerusalem, studying under Gamaliel (we may say, with almost absolute certainty, before the commencement of our Lord's ministry) he returned to his native city, and became a "tent-maker," (chap. 18. 3.) a manufacturer of the coarse goat's-hair sailcloth, for which Cilicia was famous. There seems reason to believe that somewhere about this time he became acquainted with Barnabas, and possibly also with Luke. In the interval between the Ascension and the appointment of the Seven Deacons he came up to Jerusalem. He finds a new sect, as it would seem, added to the three—the Pharisees, Sadducees, Essenes—whom he had known before. In some respects their teaching is such as Hillel, the grandfather of Gamaliel, would have approved. They pray and fast and give alms. They proclaim a resurrection and a judgment after death. They connect that proclamation with the belief that a teacher of Nazareth, who had died a malefactor's death, was the long-expected Messiah. What is he to think of these startling claims? What were others thinking? Gamaliel, his master, counseled caution and a policy of expectation, (chap. 5. 35-39;) Barnabas, his early friend, had joined the new society, (chap. 4. 36;) Andronicus and Junias, his kinsmen, had followed the example, (Rom. 16. 7.) But Saul had a zeal which was more fiery than theirs. He was a Pharisee after the strictest sect, and the teaching of Stephen, more conspicuously, it would seem, than that of Peter, was a protest against Pharisaism, and told of its coming downfall. He, therefore, could make no truce with that teaching, and burst impatiently from the cautions of his master. For good or for evil, he was at least "thorough," and had the courage of his convictions. Even the face "as of an angel," and the words of ecstatic joy, did but kindle in him the fire of a burning indignation.—*E. H. Plumptre.*

Authorized Version.

54 When they heard these things, they were cut to the heart, and they gnashed on him with *their* teeth.

54. When they heard these things—The drift of Stephen's speech toward this conclusion (the declaration that they had slain their Messiah) must have been long suspected, if not clearly seen, by so attentive and intelligent an audience; but when it was actually reached and formally propounded, and in terms

Revised Version.

54 Now when they heard these things, they were cut to the heart, and they gnashed on him with their teeth.

so terribly insulting, it is not to be considered strange that even priests and scribes expressed their brutal spite by noises borrowed from the brutes themselves.—*J. A. Alexander.* They were cut to the heart—The strict meaning of the verb describes the action of a saw; as in Heb. 11. 37. Used figuratively, it seems to imply a

Authorized Version.

55 But he, being full of the Holy Ghost, looked up stedfastly into heaven, and saw the glory of God, and Jesus standing on the right hand of God,

56 And said, Behold, ¹I see the heavens opened, and the ²Son of man standing on the right hand of God.

57 Then they cried out with a loud

¹ Matt. 3. 16.—² Dan. 7. 13; Heb. 9. 24.

more lacerating pain than the "pricked to the heart" of chap. 2. 37, leading not to repentance but to hatred.—*E. H. Plumptre*. **Gnashed on him**—The same language is used by our Lord to describe the finally lost, (Matt. 8. 12; 13. 42, etc.,) whose suffering is that of an impotent rage, not of a mere remorse, still less of a true sorrow for sin. Observe, that the passions of hell break forth in manifestations of rage and malice even on earth.—*L. Abbott*.

55. **Full of the Holy Ghost** [See notes, Lesson X, ver. 5, and Lesson XI, ver. 8.]—While his hearers yielded more and more to their violent passions, and were filled with a carnal fire, and, indeed, with a spirit from the bottomless pit, the soul of this faithful witness, on the contrary, was filled, by the grace of God, with a heavenly fire—he was *full of the Holy Ghost* from above.—*Lechler*. **Looked up . . . into heaven**—The vision was internal, not external; subjective, not objective; it was seen by Stephen only, and not by any of his hearers. It is then childish to inquire how he could see through the roof of the chamber where they were assembled.—*P. J. Gloag*. **Saw the glory of God**—The light inapproachable in which God is represented as clothed (1 Tim. 6. 16) manifested in Old Testament times by the appearance of the Shechinah, the cloud of light, called both in Old Testament and New Testament the *glory of God*.—*L. Abbott*. Stephen had begun with speaking of "the God of glory," (ver. 2.) He ends with the vision of that glory as belonging to the Son of man.—*E. H. Plumptre*. **And Jesus**—It is remarkable that the first martyr, while he was yet standing upon earth, was permitted to behold the Lamb of God in heaven, as if to show the world whence it was that every future martyr was to derive strength and constancy in the hour of trial.—*Dr. Buchanan*. **Standing on the right hand**—The place of power and honor. He will not reposingly sit while men are thus rough-dealing with his faithful confessor. He stands up to watch the bloody scene, and terribly will he require it at their

Revised Version.

55 But he, being full of the Holy Ghost, looked up stedfastly into heaven, and saw the glory of God, and Jesus standing on the right hand of God,

56 and said, Behold, I see the heavens opened, and the Son of man stand-

57 ing on the right hand of God. But they cried out with a loud voice, and

hands in the day of vengeance. So (Dan. 12. 1) Michael shall *stand up* for the children of thy people.—*Whedon*.

The exalted Saviour. I. Sitting on the right hand of the Majesty, (Heb. 1. 3; 8. 1.) (1) Ruling over all with God. (2) The Judge of the world; but also, II. Standing ready, (1) To protect his people against their enemies. (2) To receive them when they fought the good fight of faith.—*Gerok*.

Lo! God offers thee the same blessed prospect to the eyes of thy soul! Faith is the key that can open the heaven of heavens. Fix thine eyes upon the glorious and saving object; thou canst not but lay down thy body in peace.—*Bishop Hall*.

56. **Said, Behold, I see**—It is manifest that the vision was given to the inward spiritual eye, and not to that of sense. No priest or scribe saw the glory of the opened heavens, and, therefore, the words which declared that Stephen saw them seemed to them but an aggravation of guilt that was already deep.—*E. H. Plumptre*. **The Son of man**—Stephen, impelled by the Holy Spirit, employs the very same words in which Jesus himself had, before this same council, foretold his second coming in glory, (Matt. 26. 64,) and thus he indicates to them that the glorification of the Just One, whom they had betrayed and murdered, had already begun. Moreover, he thus emphasizes the truth that it is Christ in his mediatorial capacity, Christ the Saviour, Christ with all his human sympathies and affections, Christ the *Son of man*, no less than the Son of God, who is ever at the right hand of God, and who there awaits the coming of his own unto him.—*L. Abbott*. The occurrence here of the name "Son of man" is evidence in favor of the Gospel narrative, as showing that the title, which a few years afterward, for some reason or other, the disciples ceased to use, was at that earlier date familiar.—*E. H. Plumptre*.

The spiritual world is always near us; and, whenever it pleases God, it becomes visible; for example, to Elisha's servant, 2 Kings 6. 17; to Isaiah, (Isaiah 6;) to Ezekiel, and to John in Patmos.—*Canon Cook*.

57. **They cried out**—When Stephen an-

Authorized Version.

voice, and stopped their ears, and ran upon him with one accord,

58 And ³cast him out of the city, and ⁴stoned him: and ⁵the witnesses laid

³ Heb. 13, 12.—⁴ Lev. 24. 16.—⁵ Deut. 13, 9; 17. 7.

nounced his vision, that he saw that same Jesus whom they had rejected and murdered standing as the Son of man—the promised Messiah—exalted to the right hand of eternal glory, their rage knew no bounds; they could restrain themselves no longer; their pent-up passions broke through every barrier. They interrupted him with loud shouts, perhaps that the charge of blasphemy brought against him was proved by his own words, and that he should be stoned to death.—*P. J. Gloag.* **Stopped their ears—**

Revised Version.

stopped their ears, and rushed upon 58 him with one accord; and they cast him out of the city, and stoned him: and the witnesses laid down their

priest, having experienced so great difficulty in wresting a death sentence from Pilate in the case of Jesus Christ, thought it easier to incite a mob to execute it directly, without the forms of law.—*L. Abbott.*

58. Cast him out of the city—The Rabbinical books say: The place of stoning was outside the city; for all walled cities were considered to correspond to the camp of Israel.—*Alford.* The exact place of Stephen's death is not known. There are two traditions—an ancient one which



Damascus Gate.

As if to prevent them hearing any more blasphemy. **Ran upon him—**It appears very clearly that this was the act of a mob, not the regular and formal execution of a judicial sentence, which could not be executed legally by the Jews without the sanction of the Roman procurator. There is no indication here of any formal vote, or any sentence. Possibly the high-

places it on the north, beyond the Damascus gate; and a modern one, which leads travelers through what is now called the Gate of St. Stephen to a spot near the brook Kedron, over against the Garden of Gethsemane.—*Conybeare and Howson.* **And stoned him—**The manner in which the punishment of stoning was inflicted is thus described by the Jewish rabbis: The

Authorized Version.

down their clothes at a young man's feet, whose name was Saul.

59 And they stoned Stephen, calling upon God, and saying, Lord Jesus, receive ⁶my spirit.

60 And he kneeled down, and cried with a loud voice, ⁷Lord, lay not this

⁶ Psal. 31. 5. — ⁷ Matt. 5. 44; Luke 6. 28; 23. 34.

scaffold or place of stoning, to which the criminal was to be led with his hands bound, was to be twice the size of a man. One of the witnesses was then to smite him with a stone upon the breast, so as to throw him down. If he were not killed the second witness was to throw another stone at him. And then, if he were yet alive, all the people were to stone him until he was dead. The body was then to be suspended till sunset. (See Lightfoot's *Horæ Hebraicæ*.) **The witnesses**—Those who had borne testimony against Stephen, (Lesson X, verse 13.) Two, at least, were indispensable, and the law required their hands to be foremost in the execution, (Deut. 17. 7,) a regulation which must have often been a powerful indirect check to false testimony, though it had failed in this instance.—*Canon Cook*. Although all these things were done tumultuously, and that not without violation of the authority of the governor of the province, yet they would seem to do nothing but what the law of God enjoined them.—*Beza*. **Laid down their clothes**—They disencumbered themselves of their loose outer garments, that they might be light and unimpeded in the throwing of the stones.—*Alford*. **At a young man's feet**—For safe keeping. Acts 20. 22. Probably Chrysostom is not far from the truth when he states that Paul, at the time of Stephen's death, was thirty-five. There is, however, no reason to suppose, with Alford and others, that he was a member of the Sanhedrim, and one of Stephen's judges.—*P. J. Gloag*. **Whose name was Saul**—(See Introduction, "The Early Life of Saul.")

He kept the clothes of them all; and so, in a certain sense, stoned Stephen with the hands of them all.—*Augustine*.

59. **They stoned Stephen**—The verb is repeated, as if to show that the shower of stones went on even during the martyr's prayers.—*E. H. Plumptre*. **Calling upon God—God**—A word strangely inserted by the translators, and obscuring the fact that Stephen *called upon* Jesus.—*Whedon*. [The Revised Version has *calling upon the Lord*.] Observe that the New

Revised Version.

garments at the feet of a young man named Saul. And they stoned Stephen, calling upon *the Lord*, and saying, Lord Jesus, receive my spirit.

60 And he kneeled down, and cried with a loud voice, Lord, lay not this sin

Testament represents Jesus Christ as an object of worship, here of petition in the supreme moment of life, (comp. Matt. 28. 17; Luke 24. 52; Heb. 1. 6; Rev. 5. 13, 14;) and that nowhere in the New Testament is such petition presented by any disciple to saint, angel, or other created being. Observe, too, that this prayer to Christ was uttered, and this vision of him standing on the right hand of God was vouchsafed, when Stephen was *full of the Holy Ghost*; the one is therefore assuredly no error, and the other no illusion.—*L. Abbott*. **Lord Jesus, receive my spirit**—A request that Jesus as God would receive his spirit after martyrdom—similar to the prayer of Jesus on the cross, "Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit." Luke 23. 46. Thus Stephen worships Christ in the same manner as Christ before his death worshipped the Father.—*P. J. Gloag*.

The stones which the world casts at the witnesses of God; they become (1) Monuments, proclaiming the shame of the enemies of the truth. (2) Precious stones in the crowns of glorified martyrs. (3) The seed of a new life for the Church of Christ.—*Starke*.

Lord Jesus is the cry of the new-born babe in Christ, the exclamation of the aged pilgrim who is leaving the world; it is the utterance of all their grief and their hope.—*Krummacher*.

Sir Thomas More, Lord Chancellor of England, after having been tried at Westminster, and condemned to death without any just or reasonable cause, concludes his speech to his judges thus: "More have I not to say, my lords, but that as Paul held the clothes of those who stoned Stephen to death, and as they are both now saints in heaven, and shall continue there friends forever; so I verily trust, and shall, therefore, most heartily pray that, though your lordships have now here on earth been judges to my condemnation, we may nevertheless hereafter cheerfully meet in heaven in everlasting salvation."—*J. C. Gray*.

60. **He kneeled down**—"Falling upon his knees." Either as the appropriate attitude for prayer, or perhaps thrown down upon his knees by the stoning. **Lay not this sin to their charge**—The original is literally, *Weigh not against them this sin*, and is well interpreted by

Authorized Version.

sin to their charge. And when he had said this, he ⁹ fell asleep.

1 And ⁹ Saul was consenting unto his death. And at that time there was a great persecution against the church which was at Je-ru'sa-lem: and they ¹⁰ were all scattered abroad throughout the regions of Ju-de'a and Sa-ma'ri-a, except the apostles.

* 1 Thess. 4. 13; Rev. 14. 13. — ⁹ Chap. 7. 58. — ¹⁰ Chap. 11. 19.

Wordsworth, "When thou, the judge of all, weighest their actions in thy balance, do not place this sin in the scale against them." Here again we cannot help finding proof, not only that the mind of Stephen was after the mind of Christ, but that the narrative of the crucifixion, as recorded by Luke, was, in some measure, known to him. The resemblance to the prayer of Christ, "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do," (Luke 23. 34,) could hardly have been accidental. — *E. H. Plumptre*. Stephen's prayer for forgiveness of his enemies is a sufficient answer to those critics who have wished to see in the outbreak of verses 51-53 an indication of unseemly passion. — *L. Abbott*. He fell asleep — Not a Christian expression only; there are Jewish examples, and we have some even in Greek heathen poetry. But it became the *usual* Christian term for death. Its use here, when the circumstances and the actors in them are remembered, is singularly touching from the contrast. — *Alford*. It shows here that though murdered by violent hands, yet his end was as a quiet sleep, a translation rather than a death. — *P. J. Gloag*.

Of love there be two principal offices: to give and to forgive. Stephen is an excellent pattern of both. — *Dean Boys*.

It is one of the most beautiful, if not most truthful, of legends, that the blessed mother of Jesus, standing upon a rock on the other side of the valley, watched with solemn interest the issues of the bloody scene. — *Whedon*.

1. Saul was consenting — The word seems carefully chosen to convey the fact that he did not himself take part in stoning, but contented himself with guiding and directing the murder. — *E. H. Plumptre*. We are not necessarily to suppose a malignant pleasure in Stephen's suffering; rather the pleasure of a perverted conscience in the punishment of what Saul regarded as a heinous crime. — *L. Abbott*. At that time [Rev. Ver., *There arose on that day*.] — Literally, *In that day*. Matt. 13. 1; John 14. 20; 16. 23, 26, indicate that day need not

Revised Version.

to their charge. And when he had

8 said this, he fell asleep. And Saul was consenting unto his death.

And there arose on that day a great persecution against the church which was in Je-ru'salem; and they were all scattered abroad throughout the regions of Ju-dæ'a and Sa-ma'ri-a, ex-

necessarily be taken literally, but it may be so taken here. It will then indicate that the mob, incited by the work of their own passions, went directly from Stephen's corpse to the customary places of Christian assembly to disperse them. — *L. Abbott*. They were all scattered — Literally true, so far as this, that all the Christian assemblages were broken up, the body, which had hitherto met daily, (chap. 2. 46,) was scattered; but all the disciples were not driven out of Jerusalem. — *L. Abbott*. It may describe the general dispersion, without meaning that every individual fled. — *Alford*. The Pentecostal Church forever disappeared, and of it the subsequently gathered Jerusalem Church was but an indifferent successor. — *Whedon*. Throughout the regions of Judea — The province in its widest sense, including Galilee. And Samaria — The central province between Judea and Galilee. This, as a place of refuge, indicated that the barriers of the old antipathy were already in part broken down. What seemed the pressure of circumstances was leading indirectly to the fulfillment of our Lord's commands, that the disciples should be witnesses in Samaria as well as in Judea. — *E. H. Plumptre*. Except the apostles — Perhaps, from their exalted position of veneration by the people, the persecution did not extend to them; perhaps they remained, as possessed of superior firmness and devotion. — *Alford*. Perhaps they had hoped for the speedy manifestation of the Messiah there in his second coming. The fact that they could so remain shows that the persecution was as yet fitful, the action of a mob rather than of the authorities, and that in Jerusalem it spent itself in breaking up the Christian assemblies, except as Saul (verse 3) pushed his inquisition further. — *L. Abbott*. A tradition is recorded by Clement of Alexandria and Eusebius, that the Lord had commanded the apostles to remain for twelve years in Jerusalem lest any should say, "We have not heard," and after that date to go forth into the world. — *E. H. Plumptre*.

Authorized Version.

2 And devout men carried Ste'phen to his burial, and ¹¹ made great lamentation over him.

3 As for Saul, ¹² he made havoc of the church, entering into every house, and haling men and women, committed them to prison.

4 Therefore ¹³ they that were scattered abroad went every where preaching the word.

41 2 Sam. 3. 31.—121 1 Cor. 15. 9; Gal. 1. 13; Phil. 3. 6; 1 Tim. 1. 13.—12 Matt. 10. 23; chap. 11. 19; 1 Cor. 14. 31.

Revised Version.

2 cept the apostles. And devout men buried Stephen, and made great lam-

3 entation over him. But Saul laid waste the church, entering into every house, and haling men and women committed them to prison.

4 They therefore that were scattered abroad went about preaching the word.

2. **Devout men**—This expression is not used of believers in Jesus, and it must refer to Jews who had been kindled into admiration and half-conviction by the calm heroism of the martyr, and who, without committing themselves to more than that admiration, acted in his case as Nicodemus and Joseph of Arimathea had acted after the crucifixion. They would show honor to the memory of the dead, though they had not had the courage to defend the preacher of the truth while he was yet with them.—*E. H. Plumptre*. **Carried Stephen to his burial**—[Rev. Ver., *Buried Stephen*.]—The act was every way significant. Commonly, one who had been stoned to death on the charge of blasphemy would have had no funeral honors. He would have been buried "with the burial of an ass," (Jer. 22. 19.) The public lamentation on the part of men conspicuous for their devout zeal for their law, was, therefore, of the nature of a protest, probably on the part of the more moderate section of the Pharisees, against what would seem to them the unnatural coalition between the Sadducean priesthood and the ultra-zealot section of their own party.—*E. H. Plumptre*. **Made great lamentation**—Literally, *made a great beating*, the ordinary Jewish lamentation being accompanied with beating on the breast, and the like. This language implies that these devout men were still Jews in their feelings and customs, whether in heart Christians or no.—*L. Abbott*.

3. **Made havoc of** [Rev. Ver., *But Saul laid waste the church*.]—The word so rendered is properly used of wild beasts, or of hostile armies, devastating and ravaging.—*Alford*. **Entering into every house**—"Entering from house to house." Not *every house*. This is not asserted, and could hardly be literally true. This action of Saul is stated as exceptional. The intense fervor of his spirit showed itself in the vigor with which he prosecuted the persecution; he was determined to stamp out the

heresy in its inception.—*L. Abbott*. **Haling**—An old English word for *hauling*, meaning "dragging by force." There was, as the persecutor himself afterward confessed, (chap. 26. 11,) a kind of insane ferocity in his violence. Even the very word "haling" implies a brutality which might well have been spared.—*E. H. Plumptre*. **And women**—To this aggravation which, under Oriental feeling and usage, was a most emphatic proof of his violence and bitterness, reference is made in chap. 9. 2; 22. 4.—*Canon Cook*. **Committed them to prison**—Paul gives some additional particulars concerning this persecution, which apparently lasted for some months; perhaps throughout the summer. The Christians were scourged in the synagogues; were imprisoned; in some instances were put to death; the only apparent escape was by blaspheming the name of Christ; that is, openly renouncing allegiance to him, and adopting the Jewish verdict that he was an impostor worthy of death.—*L. Abbott*.

4. **Went every where**—This has since become literally true; but at this time the dispersion of the Christians could hardly have extended beyond the bounds of Palestine. The original implies no more; it is, literally, *passed through*, that is, the country.—*L. Abbott*. **Preaching**—The attempt to stamp out the new faith did but give it a wider scope of action, and urged it on to pass the limits within which it might otherwise have been confined for a much longer period.—*E. H. Plumptre*. **The word**—Here first we become acquainted with the missionary language so frequent in the rest of the book; and we have "the word," an abbreviated expression, very familiar among Christians when the book was written, for the fuller one which must have prevailed at first, *the word of God*.—*Alford*. To these early Christians, the *only* word was the word of life through Jesus Christ.—*L. Abbott*. We have here a signal illustration of the providential

law according to which what appears to be an irretrievable calamity is not only overruled, but designed from the beginning to promote the very cause which it seems to threaten with disaster and defeat.—*J. A. Alexander.*

Authorities to be Consulted.

Conybeare & Howson's *Life and Epistles of St. Paul*, chap. ii. Farrar's *Life and Work of St. Paul*, chaps. vii, viii, ix. Keble's *Christian Year*, "St. Stephen's Day." Edmonson's *Short Sermons*, 502. Simeon's *Horæ Homileticæ*. *Biblical Studies*, (E. H. Plumptre,) 359. Freeman's *Bible Manners and Customs*, 661, 686, 727. *The Preacher*, (London,) iv, 23. Schaff's *Apostolic Church*. Foster's *Cyclopedia of Illustrations* (Figures marked with a star refer to poetical volumes)—ver. 55: *1473, *4017, 9554; vers. 55-60: *4018, *4019, 1718, 4398, 625, *2155, *2803, 6396, 11827, *3741, *2252, 7777; vers. 2-4: 7803, 7240, 9160.

Root Thoughts.

A blood-red picture of human hate and of utter defeat. Test after test has been applied. The Church endures. Argument after argument has been answered. Scheme after scheme has been thwarted. There must be an end. Here we have the outcome of bigotry and rage and impotency. When foiled fiends can no longer argue they scheme. When sharp schemes fail they fly to stones. And when human nature gets a taste of blood the tiger is roused and the fangs are red.

But these fiends put into history a splendid record for the saints they seek to destroy. What a triumph for the young and struggling Church! It is regal. No warrior ever won in battle such renown as is achieved by the glorious martyr Stephen.

At Pentecost we saw how the Spirit could inspire men to *talk*. After Pentecost for days we saw how the same Spirit could inspire them to *stand* in defiance of councils. Here we see how the same Spirit of life could prepare them to *die*.

At Stephen's martyrdom the world is at its worst, and the Church is at its best.

When a saint dies the gates of heaven must of necessity open. When martyrs die the gates fly wide open.

Saints' visions are not phantasms but facts. Jesus is now, as then, the Friend, the Deliverer, the Compassion, of his people. Stones may blind Stephen's eyes, but there is vision for blind saints. Stones may cause torture, but they give sleep, sweet sleep of the weary; rest after the hard-fought battle. Thanks be unto God who giveth us the victory.

Stephen dead, his voice hushed, his earthly career closed, but the still Stephen stirs the Church into new activity. It goes every-where since it cannot stay in Jerusalem. And that death vision of the first martyr increased both the faith and zeal of believers.

Where there are valleys there must be mountains. It is only one glance from the depths to the heights. Stephen asleep in his blood, and Saul of Tarsus witnessing, consenting, co-operating, and resolving upon bolder plans of persecution. But look up! O Church in the valley, who is the giant and the hero upon the mountains yonder? Soon will Saul, consenting to Stephen's death, be Paul, submitting to Stephen's Lord.

Practical Thoughts.

[THE DEATH OF THE SAINT.]

1. The beaming face of the saint about to die shines all the more glorious in contrast with the lowering looks of his enemies. Ver. 54.

2. The saint about to die alone, surrounded by enemies, is cheered by visions of glory and beholds his Saviour rising from his throne to welcome him. Ver. 55, 56.

3. The saint about to die by the hands of enemies, bears a ringing testimony to his Saviour's glory and power. Ver. 56.

4. The unfinished work of the dying saint is destined to be taken up and carried forward by the bitterest of his enemies. Ver. 58.

5. The dying saint looks to Jesus as his Lord, and intrusts his spirit to his care. Ver. 59.

6. The dying saint breathes the spirit of his Saviour, and offers his last prayer for his enemies. Ver. 60.

7. The saint, though dying by violence, yet falls sweetly asleep in the arms of his Lord. Ver. 60.

8. The saint's death may be mourned by men, but is precious to God. Ver. 2. Psa. 116. 15.

9. The saint's death by enemies only scatters the seeds of the Gospel more widely. Ver. 4.

SECOND QUARTER.

STUDIES IN THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES.



Samaria.

A. D. 37.]

LESSON I.

[April 1.

SIMON THE SORCERER.—Acts 8. 14-25.

GOLDEN TEXT.—Thy heart is not right in the sight of God.—Acts 8. 21.

TIME.—A. D. 37, a few months after the death of Stephen.

PLACE.—The city of Samaria in Central Palestine.

CONNECTING LINKS.—The preaching of Philip in Samaria.

INTRODUCTION.—After the dispersion of the Pentecostal Church at Jerusalem, Philip, "one of the seven," went to a city in Samaria, either (as is believed by most writers) "*the city of Samaria*," its capital, the ancient Samaria, in the apostolic age called Sebaste; or (according to Professor Plumptre) the city of Shechem, or Sychar, (now Nablus), which is called "a city of Samaria" in John 6. Here he preached the gospel with such success that the people in multitudes professed faith in Christ. *The work of Philip.*—Stephen closes the Pentecostal Church, Philip opens the missionary or modern Church. To Stephen belongs the headship of the glorious army of martyrs, to Philip the leadership of the glorious army of foreign missionaries. Both were forerunners of Paul, the former in proclaiming the cessation of ritualism, the latter in heralding the gospel beyond the boundaries of Judaism. Paul was Stephen and Philip united and enlarged.—*Whedon.*

Authorized Version.

14 Now when the apostles which were at Je-ru'sa-lem heard that Sa-ma'ri-a had received the word of God, they sent unto them Pe'ter and John:

14. The apostles which were at Jerusalem—The apostolic body acted organically, so that they must have been still in secret organized and authoritative position. — *Whedon.*

Revised Version.

14 Now when the apostles which were at Je-ru'sa-lem heard that Sa-ma'ri-a had received the word of God, they sent unto them Pe'ter and John:

Heard that Samaria had received—The success of the gospel in a particular city of Samaria was regarded as a proof or pledge that the Samaritans in general had embraced the gospel;

Authorized Version.

15 Who, when they were come down, prayed for them, ¹that they might receive the Holy Ghost:

16 (For ²as yet he was fallen upon none of them: only ³they were baptized in ⁴the name of the Lord Je'sus.)

¹ Chap. 2. 38. — ² Chap. 19. 2. — ³ Matt. 28. 19; chap. 2. 38. — ⁴ Chap. 10. 48.



it showed that there was nothing either in the nature of the gospel or in the nation of the Samaritans which formed an obstacle to their conversion. This was an important step in advance. Hitherto Christianity had been limited to those who were pure Jews. Christians before this were merely a Jewish sect, but now, in the reception of the gospel by the Samaritans, it overpassed the limits of Judaism.

—*P. J. Gloag.* **They sent unto them**—The sudden appearance of a body of baptized believers in Samaria, by the agency of one who was *not one of the apostles*, while it would excite in them every feeling of thankfulness and joy, would require their presence and power, as apostles, to perform their especial part as the divinely appointed founders of the Church. Add to this that the Samaritans appear to have been credulous, and easily moved to attach themselves to individuals, whether it were Simon or Philip, which might make the apostles desirous to be present in person, and examine and strengthen their faith. Another reason may have been not without its influence: the Jewish Church at Jerusalem would naturally for the most part be alienated in mind from this new body of believers. The hatred between Jews and Samaritans was excessive and unrelenting. It would therefore be in the highest degree important that it should be shown to the Church at Jerusalem that these Samaritans, by the agency of the same apostles, were partakers of the same visibly testified gifts of the one Spirit.—*Alford.* **Peter and John**—Perhaps *two*, in accordance with their having been sent out *two and two* on their first missionary journey, (Mark 6. 7,) so Paul and Barnabas afterward, (chap. 13. 2;) and the same principle seems to have been adhered to even when these last separated: Paul chose Silas, Barnabas took Mark.—*Alford.* Peter was sent by the body of apostles. Hence he could not have been chief or primate, as the Roman-

Revised Version.

15 who, when they were come down, prayed for them, that they might receive the Holy Ghost: for as yet he was fallen upon none of them: only they had been baptized into the 17 name of the Lord Je'sus. Then laid

ists assert.—*Jacobus.* This is the last time that *John* appears in the Acts. He is only once more mentioned in the New Testament, (except in the Revelation,) namely, as having been present in Jerusalem at Paul's visit. Gal. 2. 9.—*Alford.*

The Church must spread itself over the world, but at the same time must preserve its unity in the world.—*Luthardt.*

15. Who when they were come—Perhaps the purpose of their coming was general—to examine into the state of the Church in Samaria, to supply what was wanting, to extend the hand of fellowship to the newly converted, and to unite them and the Jewish Christians into one Church of Christ.—*P. J. Gloag.* Philip held the apostles as much his superiors here as in Jerusalem, and the apostles came with the same spirit of wise and holy supervision as they exerted in first establishing the deaconship.—*Whedon.* **Prayed for them**—The pastor's work includes prayer as well as preaching. God does not withhold an answer to the prayers of his servants for the salvation of the souls intrusted to their care.—*Gerok.* **Come down**—Refers to the position of Jerusalem on a site more elevated than the most of the country, so that going to it was regarded as "going up," and *vice versa*. **Receive the Holy Ghost**—The prayer clearly pointed to such a gift of the power of the Spirit as had been bestowed on the day of Pentecost. It assumed that such gifts had been received by the disciples generally at Jerusalem, and that they were distinct from the new birth of water and the Spirit (John 3. 5) which was given through baptism.—*E. H. Plumptre.* Luke speaks not in this place of the common grace of the Spirit, whereby God regenerates us that we may be his children, but of those singular gifts wherewith God would have certain endowed at the beginning of the gospel to beautify the kingdom of Christ.—*Calvin.*

16. He was fallen upon none of them—Philip could not bestow the Holy Ghost, because he was not an apostle. This, though not expressly stated, yet seems implied in the narrative. The only instance when the Holy Ghost was imparted by one not an apostle was that in

Authorized Version.

17 Then ⁶laid they *their* hands on them, and they received the Holy Ghost.

18 And when Si'mon saw that through laying on of the apostles' hands the Holy Ghost was given, he offered them money,

⁶ Chap. 6. 6; Heb. 6. 2.

Revised Version.

they their hands on them, and they 18 received the Holy Ghost. Now when Si'mon saw that through the laying on of the apostles' hands the ¹ Holy Ghost was given, he offered them

¹ Some ancient authorities omit *Holy*.

Saul's conversion by the hands of Ananias of Damascus, and this appears to have been by special revelation. The restriction of the conveyance of such gifts to the apostles is a very strong presumption in favor of the view that miraculous powers ceased with the generation among whom there survived some on whom the apostles had laid their hands.—*Canon Cook*. **Baptized in the name**—There is no case in the New Testament in which the apostles are reported to have baptized in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost, a conclusive indication that they did not understand that Christ (in Matt. 28. 19) prescribed that as a necessary formula. The customary form was that here indicated.—*L. Abbott*.

17. **Laid . . . their hands on them**—This was part of that miraculous supremacy of the apostles—Christ's own chosen, original, witnessing twelve—which they could not communicate to any fellow, or transmit to any successor.—*Whedon*. **Received the Holy Ghost**—Manifestations now followed similar to those on the day of Pentecost; and the believers were thus recognized and attested to be a Christian Church, standing in an equal rank with the first Church at Jerusalem.—*Neander*. We have here, as at Cæsarea, (chap. 10. 44-48,) and at Ephesus, (chap. 19. 5-7,) a miniature Pentecost, in which a new inauguration seems to take place by the repetition of the same charismatic effusions, each time under apostolic supervision.—*Whedon*.

18. **Simon (the Sorcerer)**—Simon was one of those magicians or sorcerers who were then frequent in the East. It was a period of a great religious crisis; there was a general expectation throughout the East of the advent of some great deliverer; the Messianic notions of the Jews were spread abroad, and hence many impostors, taking advantage of this fact, deceived the people. We have examples of them in Elymas, (Acts 13;) in Apollonius of Tyana in Cappadocia, a contemporary of the apostles, and in Alexander of Aboneitochos in Pontus, (Lucian.) These men went about as sorcerers, and deceived the people with their tricks, perhaps by possessing a superior knowledge of the laws of nature, especially of chemistry. As astrologers,

they pretended to read the fortunes of individuals in the heavenly bodies; and as magicians they deceived the people with their magical arts, and thus obtained credit as if they were actually endowed with supernatural powers.—*P. J. Gloag*. Perhaps they possessed some peculiar psychologic or mesmeric powers, such as may be seen at the present time, and the principles of which are not even yet clearly understood.—*H*. The Simon of tradition was a native of Cyprus; professed to believe the Oriental philosophy of his day; claimed to be himself an *eon* or emanation from the deity; traveled about with a beautiful prostitute, whom he represented as another divine emanation; aided Felix in seducing Drusilla, the queen of Emesa, (see Acts 24. 24;) subsequently came to Rome, where he continued to practice his magic arts, probably until his death, the legendary account of which is intrinsically improbable. He was the founder of an heretical sect, called from his name Simonians; the author of some extinct heretical books; and is accused of forging and circulating other books in the name of Christ and his disciples.—*L. Abbott*. **When Simon saw**—Its effects were, therefore, *visible*, (see above,) and consequently the effect of laying on of the apostles' hands was not the *inward* but the *outward miraculous* gifts of the Spirit.—*Alford*. Simon the Magus is intently gazing on Simon the Apostle; the very emblem of error and sin malignly eyeing the power of Christian truth and holiness, incapable of understanding its nature. He sees a work performed on the young Samaritan converts that raises them above themselves. He notes how beautiful and miraculous the results. These apostles he sees are higher than the deacon; they are the topmost masters of the new system, the possessors of the original wonder-working power, alone able to impart that power to others. From them, and not from their subordinate, Philip, must the true primal secret be obtained.—*Whedon*. **Through laying on of the apostles' hands**—He regarded the capability of imparting the Holy Spirit, *rightly as something conferred, as a derived power*, (see Matt. 10. 1;) *but wrongly*, as one to be obtained by an *external method*, without an

Authorized Version.

19 Saying, Give me also this power, that on whomsoever I lay hands, he may receive the Holy Ghost.

20 But Pe'ter said unto him, Thy money perish with thee, because thou hast thought that the gift of God may be purchased with money.

21 Thou hast neither part nor lot in this matter: for thy heart is not right in the sight of God.

* 2 Kings 5. 16; Micah 3. 11, 12; Matt. 10. 8.—† Chap. 2. 38; 11. 17.—‡ Prov. 6. 16, 18; 11. 30; 12. 20; Isa. 44. 20; Jer. 17. 9; Rom. 8. 7; 2 Tim. 3. 5.

inward disposition, and since in internal commerce every thing may be had for gold, *he wanted to buy it.*—*De Wette.* He offered them money—To the sorcerer, accustomed to charms and incantations, the men who were in possession of this power would seem to be enchanters with a higher knowledge than his own, and he who had purchased many such secrets, after the manner of the time, (compare chap. 19. 19,) from the previous masters in the magic art, thought that this might be obtained in the same way.—*E. H. Plumptre.* Whether he openly proposed to buy, or whether his act was a secret one, in the nature of an attempted bribery, the account does not indicate; the latter supposition is the more inherently probable.—*L. Abbott.*

19. Give me also this power—He hopes to buy a seat in the apostolic college. From his name a mercenary traffic in holy things has, through the Christian ages, been called *simony*.—*Whedon.* He may receive the Holy Ghost—*Holy Ghost* here, being without the article, may mean a *Holy Spirit*, and imply the want of any definite conception as to a personal agent. What precise meaning he attached to the phrase we have no means of determining. He may have used it merely as he heard it from others, without knowing what it meant at all.—*J. A. Alexander.* Clearly, from the narrative, Simon himself *did not receive the Spirit by the laying on of hands.* His nefarious attempt to treat with the apostles was before he himself had been presented to them for this purpose.—*Alford.* It is probable enough that he was impressed by the signs that Philip wrought; that he felt himself in the presence of a Power above his own; that he accepted Philip's statements as to the death and resurrection of the Christ. It was such a faith as that of which James speaks. James 2. 14. 19. If we are to use the definite language of theological science, it would be true to say that he had the *fides informis*, faith not

Revised Version.

19 money, saying, Give me also this power, that on whomsoever I lay my hands, he may receive the Holy Ghost. But Pe'ter said unto him, Thy silver perish with thee, because thou hast thought to obtain the gift

21 of God with money. Thou hast neither part nor lot in this matter: for thy heart is not right before God.

2 Gr. word.

preceded by repentance and not perfected by love. And baptism, in such a case, the expressed or implied conditions being absent, brought with it no new birth to a higher life.—*E. H. Plumptre.*

Judas sold the Son, Simon would have bought the Holy Ghost.—*Whedon.*

Two monks having come one day to William Rufus, King of England, to buy an abbot's place, outreached each other in the sums they offered. The king said to a third monk, who stood by, "What wilt thou give for the place?" "Not a penny," answered the monk, "for it is against my conscience." "Then," replied the king, "thou of the three best deservest it," and instantly gave it to him.—*J. C. Gray.*

20. Peter said—No parleying with temptation. No satin sheath for the sword of truth. Holy indignation, uttered with terrible emphasis. Thy money perish with thee—Thy gold and thou are equally on the way to corruption; thy gold, as its nature is; Thou with it as having no higher life than thy natural corrupt one; as being bound in the bond of iniquity.—*Alford.* This is not an anathema with the sense of a consignment of Simon to destruction, for in the next sentence Peter admonishes him to pray for forgiveness.—*L. Abbott.*

Money is a mighty power for evil or for good. With it a man may purchase death and damnation; with it he may increase his treasures in heaven.—*Whedon.*

21. Thou hast neither part nor lot—There is any difference in these words, the first indicates a portion already assigned; the second, one yet to be assigned. The first would then indicate that Simon had no present portion in Christian gifts; the second, no share in the future inheritance of the saints. And this appears to me to be the meaning. By most commentators, however, the terms are taken as synonymous, and the double expression as sim-

Authorized Version.

22 Repent therefore of this thy wickedness, and pray God, ^aif perhaps the thought of thine heart may be forgiven thee.

23 For I perceive that thou art in the gall ¹⁰of bitterness, and *in* the bond of iniquity.

24 Then answered Si'mon, and said, Pray ye ¹¹to the Lord for me, that none

^a Isa. 55. 7; Dan. 4. 27; 2 Tim. 2. 25.—¹⁰ Heb. 12. 15.—¹¹ Gen. 20. 7; Exod. 8. 8; Num. 21. 7; Job 42. 8; James 5. 16.

ply emphatic.—*L. Abbott.* In this matter [*In this word*, Rev. Ver., margin.]—The term is sometimes employed for the matter spoken of, the subject of discourse, as in Luke 1. 4; Acts 15. 6; hence some (Lechler, Meyer, De Wette) translate the phrase "In this matter," or more exactly, "In this matter about which the discourse is;" that is, in the gifts of the Holy Ghost, and this seems to be the correct interpretation.—*P. J. Gloag.* Heart is not right—"Straight," or "right," is used, as in Matt. 3. 3; Mark 1. 3, for straightforward, not in the secondary sense of "being as it ought to be." The word is not of frequent occurrence in the New Testament, but, like so many of the spoken words of Peter, meets us again as coming from his pen. 2 Peter 2. 15.—*E. H. Plumptre.*

Phillip took him for a right honest man, and baptized him; but Peter soon smelt a fox, and drew him out of his den into the open light. Hypocrites shall, sooner or later, be detected; their name must rot.—*Trapp.*

22. Repent therefore—Literally, *Repent from thy wickedness*, for repentance is a mental turning away from the wrong, and its effect is separation from it.—*Whedon.* And pray God—A wicked man may pray, and ought to pray. As bad as Simon Magus was, St. Peter doth not drive him to despair, but directs him to his duty.—*Burkitt.* If perhaps—Here evidently a doubt as to Simon's obtaining forgiveness is expressed. Some (Hackett, Alford) suppose that Peter here expresses his doubts whether Simon, in desiring to purchase the Holy Ghost, may not have committed the unpardonable sin. Others (De Wette, Bengel, Kuinoel) refer the doubt to Simon's repentance. Simon was so far gone in sin, so sunk in depravity, that his repentance was extremely doubtful. And it is the blessed doctrine of the gospel that whoever repents, be his sins what they may, will be forgiven. The sin against the Holy Ghost excludes the idea of forgiveness. Peter here, then, expresses no doubt of God's forgiveness, no limitation of his mercy;

Revised Version.

22 Repent therefore of this thy wickedness, and pray the Lord, if perhaps the thought of thy heart shall be

23 forgiven thee. For I see that thou ^aart in the gall of bitterness and in

24 the bond of iniquity. And Si'mon answered and said, Pray ye for me to the Lord, that none of the things

^a Or, wilt become gall (or, a gall root) of bitterness and a bond of iniquity.

but the doubt refers to Simon's repentance, which was hardly to be expected.—*P. J. Gloag.* The thought of thine heart—Observe again, it is the *thought* that needs forgiveness, and the thought, not of the *mind*, but of the heart; the thought is wholly wrong, because the affections are earthly and sensual.—*L. Abbott.* May be forgiven—This verse is important, taken in connection with John 20. 23, as showing how completely the apostles themselves referred the forgiveness of sins to, and left it in, the sovereign power of God, and not to their own delegated power of absolution.—*Alford.*

23. In the gall of bitterness—Bitterness is depravity; true hatred and malignity against holiness and God. But in Simon the apostle sees the very gall of such bitterness, the very quintessence of depravity.—*Whedon.* The poison of serpents was considered to be seated in their gall; so "the gall of asps is within him." Job 20. 14.—*Alford.* Bond of iniquity—Hemmed around by habits and principles of iniquity, as if bound fast by a fetter or bond, from which he cannot energetically even *will* to escape.—*Whedon.*

The bitterness of sin is not a medicinal and wholesome bitterness, but an intoxicating and stupefying bitterness, a poisonous and a lawful bitterness. Sin's bitter draught is a baneful draught.—*Burkitt.*

24. Then answered Simon—For a moment the Magus is overawed. He believes the divine power to reside in the apostles, and trembles at the perdition into which Peter's imprecation precipitates his money and himself. He begs their prayer, not as refusing to pray for himself, but as believing they have an interest with the Divine, while his is only with the lower powers. But still his lower dregs of character remain undisturbed. Peter tells him to seek forgiveness; he only wants the aversion of threatened evil. He is at bottom still a sorcerer, and has not the slightest purpose of turning from his deviltries and demonish ways.—*Whedon.* Pray ye the Lord—There is something eminently

Authorized Version.

of these things which ye have spoken come upon me.

25 And they, when they had testified and preached the word of the Lord, returned to Je-ru'sa-lem, and preached the Gospel in many villages of the Sa-mar'i-tans.

characteristic in the sorcerer's words, (1) His conscience reads "between the lines" of Peter's address what was not actually found there. That "if perhaps" is to him as the knell of doom; (2) He prays, not for deliverance from the bond of iniquity," but only from the vague terror of a future penalty; (3) He turns, not, as Peter has bidden him, to the Lord, who was ready to forgive, but to a human mediator. Peter must pray for him who has not faith to pray for himself.—*E. H. Plumptre*. **None of these things**—The words "That none of these things which ye have spoken come upon me," seem remarkably to set forth the mere terror of the carnal man, without any idea of the *me* becoming *another man* in thought and aims.—*Alford*.

25. **When they had testified**—The apostolical preaching was, as we see in all of Peter's discourses in the earlier part of the Acts, a

Revised Version.

which ye have spoken come upon me.

25 They therefore, when they had testified and spoken the word of the Lord, returned to Je-ru'sa-lem, and preached the gospel to many villages of the Sa-mar'i-tans.

the word of the Lord.] **Preached . . . in many villages** [Rev. Ver., *Preached the gospel to many villages.*]—Literally, *Evangelized many villages*. **Villages of the Samaritans**—The statement involves a stay of some duration, long enough to found and organize a community of disciples. And this was followed, not by an immediate return to Jerusalem, but, as the Greek tense shows, by one with many halts, at each of which the glad tidings of "the word of the Lord" were proclaimed, and a Church founded. Did the apostles enter on this journey into the village on which one of them had sought to call down fire from heaven? Luke 9. 54. Now, at least, he had learned to know "what manner of Spirit" claimed him as his own.—*E. H. Plumptre*.

Authorities to be Consulted.

Smith's New Testament History. Milman's History of Christianity. Schaff's History of the



Ruins at Samaria.

testimony to the facts of Jesus' life, death, and resurrection, and to the truth of his divine appointment as Redeemer. **Preached the word** [Rev. Ver., *When they had testified and spoken*

Apostolic Church. Pulpit Analyst, iv, 339. Peter the Apostle, by Dr. W. M. Taylor, p. 253. Words of the Apostles, by Rudolf Stier. The Church of the First Days, by C. J. Vaughan.

Foster's Cyclopaedia of Illustrations—4945, 10622, 9404, 4981, 4548.

Root Thoughts.

As the gospel goes into the regions beyond it encounters new difficulties—peculiar to the false doctrines which are held, and the consequent bias and depravity of the new candidates.

These Samaritan disciples "had received the word of God;" they "had been baptized into the name of the Lord Jesus." "Signs and great miracles" had been wrought. Ver. 13. Thus far had they seen; thus far had they gone. But there was something beyond; a higher blessing. And when the hands of the apostles were laid on them that blessing came. The act of laying on of hands was a symbol. To the Samaritans it conveyed a lesson touching the divine gift. It was a sign of spiritual power—the power which comes to us and to all in answer to prayer. Luke 11. 13; Acts 1. 14; 2. 1-4.

The gradation of earthly endowment finds its correspondence in the celestial heights of knowledge and of joy. There are not only "second blessings" in God's kingdom, but sevens and seventy times seven, all the way up from tender penitence to thrones of power.

In melancholy contrast with the receptive Samaritans is the deceptive Simon. He also heard and believed and was baptized. And up to this point between him and the rest it was hard to distinguish. But with the gift of power came discrimination. He lacked a somewhat that they had. He coveted it, through his old, carnal, coveting nature, which had not been changed by "believing" and by being "baptized." The old force of his life remained and sought to put on new power for its own promotion. He was a juggler still, and wanted to use the divine grace to adorn his old profession. He would add one more to his magic arts; would give one more proof of his skill; would,

by one more mysterious movement, amaze his wonder-loving followers. There was no change in him. The root was the same, even though some beautiful and foreign leaves and blossoms tied to the old stalk had changed its appearance.

How little he knew of the kingdom of grace! He thought it was a power in man. He measured its values as he speculated in legerdemain, and supposed that he could buy not only a blessing, but the power to bestow blessing by the apostles' "touch."

Burning words, like the blast from an open furnace, came rushing from the apostles to the sorcerer. He trembled, and cried out for mercy. Can mercy come to such as he? Nothing in the lesson gives strong hope for such utter selfishness, and yet there is a ray of hope. Verily it is a terrible thing to turn sacred and divine endowments into selfish chances!

Practical Thoughts.

[THE WRONG HEART IN THE CHURCH.]

1. One may be a member of the Church, and in outward conformity, whose heart is yet wrong in God's sight.
2. The wrong heart seeks to use the gospel and the Church for ends of personal gain. Vers. 18, 19.
3. The wrong heart in the Church utterly fails to comprehend the spiritual forces of the gospel. Vers. 18, 19.
4. The wrong heart in the Church is sure to be unmasked by inspiration. Vers. 20, 21.
5. The wrong heart, though outwardly in the Church, yet has no true sympathy with God's work. Ver. 21.
6. The wrong heart may find pardon by the mercy of God. Ver. 22.
7. The wrong heart should seek forgiveness by repentance and prayer. Ver. 22.
8. The wrong heart is in bitterness and in bonds to Satan's power. Ver. 23.

A. D. 37.]

LESSON II.

[April 8.

PHILIP AND THE ETHIOPIAN.—Acts 8. 26-40.

GOLDEN TEXT.—And he went on his way rejoicing.—Acts 8. 39.**TIME.**—A. D. 37, immediately after the events of the last lesson.**PLACE.**—The desert south-west of Palestine.

INTRODUCTION.—This narrative affords a further illustration of the progress of the Gospel in its extension beyond the bounds of Judaism. From preaching to the Samaritans, whose religion was Jewish, but corrupted, Philip is directed to preach it to a heathen; but one who has already, at least partially, accepted the Jewish faith. The eunuch, converted, carries the Gospel with him into his own country. Philip continues his ministry throughout the border cities, of the Holy Land, which are largely Gentile.

—L. Abbott.

Authorized Version.

26 And ¹the angel of the Lord spake unto Phil'ip, saying, Arise, and go toward the south, unto the way that goeth down from Je-ru'sa-lem unto Ga'za, which is desert.

¹ Psa. 91. 11; Heb. 1. 14.

26. The angel [Rev. Ver., *An angel*] of the Lord.—[See note, 1st Quar., Lesson IX, ver. 19.] An angel *visibly appearing*, not in a dream, which is not, as some suppose, implied by the command to *arise*.—*Alford*. Spake unto Philip—Philip was “one of the seven,” often called *deacons*. [1st Quar., Lesson X.] He had been driven out of Jerusalem by the persecution led by Saul of Tarsus, and preached the Gospel with great success in Samaria. [See Lesson I.] A striking contrast is apparent in the characters of Stephen and Philip. The whole history of the former grows out of his own intense, stern, tragic personality; whereas the latter appears cheery, spiritualistic, and alert, and the effects he accomplishes are produced almost unexpectedly to himself, and rather through him than by him. The only express words of his recorded (ver. 30) contain a pleasantry.—*Whedon*. Toward the south—From Samaria, where he then was. Unto the way which is desert—It is the “way,” not the city, which is thus described, and the description is added by the angel to distinguish which road Philip should take. There are several; the most direct is now the desert road, without towns or villages. This desert way gave opportunity for the eunuch to read the Scripture, and to Philip to baptize him without attracting observation.—*L. Abbott*. Gaza—The southernmost city of Canaan (Gen. 10. 19) in the part of Judah (Josh. 15. 47) but soon taken from that tribe by the Philistines, and always spoken of as a Philistian city. Alexander the Great took it after a siege of five months, but did not destroy it, for we find it a

Revised Version.

26 But an angel of the Lord spake unto Phil'ip, saying, Arise, and go ¹toward the south unto the way that goeth down from Je-ru'sa-lem unto Ga'za: 27 the same is desert. And he arose

¹ Or, at noon.

strong place in the subsequent Syrian wars. It



was destroyed by the Jewish king, Alexander Jan-nac-us, 96 B. C., after a siege of a year, but re-built again by the Roman general, Galbinus, after-ward given by Augustus to Herod, and finally, after his death, attached to the province of Syria. Mela, in the time of Claudius, calls it “a vast city, and strongly fortified,” with which agree Eusebius and Jerome. At present it is a large town by the same name, with from 15,000 to 16,000 inhabitants.—*L. Abbott*.

How precious in the eyes of God is the conversion of a single soul! For the sake of imparting a saving faith to the eunuch he sends an angel to Philip and commands the latter to withdraw from the populous regions of Samaria to the desolate road leading to Gaza.—*Brandt*.

Philip was on the road to Gaza, a model as a faithful minister of the word: (1) By the devout obedience with which he yields to the impulse of the spirit, (verses 26, 29.) (2) By the apostolical courage with which he approaches the stranger, (verse 30.) (3) By the evangelical wisdom with which he cherishes the spark of faith in the eunuch's soul. (4) By the priestly anointing by which, at the right moment, he seals the rescued soul unto the Lord. (5) By the Christian humility with which after the completion of his work, he submits the result to the Lord.—*Gerok*.

Authorized Version.

27 And he arose and went: and, behold, a ²man of E'thi-o'-pi-a, an eunuch of great authority under Can'da-ce, queen of the E'thi-o'-pi-ans, who had the charge of all her treasure, and ³had come to Je-ru'sa-lem for to worship,

28 Was returning, and sitting in his chariot read E-sa'ias the prophet.

29 Then the Spirit said unto Phil'ip, Go near, and join thyself to this chariot.

² Psa. 87. 4; Isa. 43. 6; Zeph. 3. 10.—³ 1 Kings 8. 41; Psa. 68. 29; Isa. 56. 3-8; John 12. 20.

27. **A man of Ethiopia**—In its largest sense the term "Ethiopia" was applied to all the African lands south of Egypt; more definitely, it included the modern Nubia, Sennaar, Kordofan, and part of Abyssinia. Its inhabitants were black in color and large in stature. Their land appears to have been one of wealth, and to have maintained some commercial relations with Palestine. The Hebrew equivalent for Ethiopia is Cush, and by this name it is designated in Genesis.—*L. Abbott.* **A eunuch of great authority**—The word etymologically signifies a couch-keeper or chamberlain, and designates a class of mutilated men who are in the East employed to guard the harems. But as in the palaces of princes such persons often gained the personal confidence of the despot, and became his chief adviser, so the very word *eunuch* was often used of officers of state who belonged not to this injured class. Yet the Greek for *of great authority*, a *dynast* or potentate, seems to express the official power, and leaves the term eunuch to its natural meaning.—*Whedon.* **Candace**—Candace was queen of



Meroe, (near the modern Sennaar,) an island, or rather peninsula, formed by two arms of the river, a thousand miles up the Nile from Alexandria, to which city the eunuch is on his way to take his upward-sailing Nile boat, made, perhaps, of papyrus and acacia.

The name of Candace (spelled Kandakatis) is still found on her palace walls in Meroe, as in the cut, in hieroglyphical characters.—*Whedon.* **Come to Jerusalem for to worship**—He must, then, have been a believer in the God of Israel, and presumptively a proselyte, who had publicly accepted the Hebrew religion. His journey of more than twelve hundred miles, to worship, his study of Scripture, and his readiness to receive the Gospel, all indicate a man of

Revised Version.

and went: and behold, a man of E'thi-o'-pi-a, a eunuch of great authority under Can'da-ce, queen of the E'thi-o'-pi-ans, who was over all her treasure, who had come to Je-ru'sa-

28 lem for to worship; and he was returning and sitting in his chariot, and was reading the prophet I-sa'iah.

29 And the Spirit said unto Phil'ip, Go near, and join thyself to this chariot.

genuine religious spirit and purpose.—*L. Abbott.*

A nobleman, a courtier, a treasurer to the queen, yet he concerns himself with religion, and, being a proselyte, travels in his chariot as far as Jerusalem to worship God in a solemn manner. O how will this example rise up in judgment against our great ones, who have more light but less heat; more knowledge but less love!—*Burkitt.*

28. **Was returning**—Painfully feeling his departure from the Temple of Jehovah, on the holy hill, and from his solemn worship, he clings to another sanctuary, which he carries with him, in order that at home, in his distant land and solitude, he might have a compensation for the richer blessings of the house of God, namely, to the writings of Moses and the prophets.—*Baumgarten.* **Read Esaias** [Rev. Ver., *Was reading the prophet Isaiah.*]—After the manner of most Eastern nations, to whom silent reading is almost unknown, the eunuch was reading aloud. Philip heard him, and so gained an opening for conversation. Was the roll of Isaiah a new-found treasure? Had he bought the MSS. in Jerusalem, and was he reading the wonderful utterances for the first time? The whole narrative implies that he was reading the LXX version.—*E. H. Plumptre.* Schöttgen quotes from the rabbis: "He who journeyeth and hath no companion, let him study the Law."—*Alford.*

The Bible, the best book for reading on a journey: (1) We thus forget the difficulties of the road. (2) We cease to gaze on forbidden paths. (3) We form a happy acquaintance with many fellow-travelers. (4) We remain in the right road and safely reach our destination.—*Gerok.*

29. **The Spirit said**—It was a distinct divine impulse, but how coming we have no means of judging. I see no reason for believing that such impulses as are described here and

Authorized Version.

30 And Phil'ip ran thither to *him*, and heard him read the prophet E-sa'-ias, and said, Understandest thou what thou readeſt?

31 And he said, How can I, except some man should guide me? And he desired Phil'ip that he would come up and sit with him.

32 The place of the Scripture which he read was this, 'He was led as a sheep to the slaughter; and like a lamb dumb before his shearer, so opened he not his mouth:

33 In his humiliation his judgment was taken away: and who shall declare his generation? for his life is taken from the earth.

^a Isa. 53. 7; Phil. 2. 7, 8.

elsewhere in the Bible (compare chap. 13. 2; 16. 6, 7) were in anywise different from those calls to duty, common in Christian experience, which consists in special inward impulses, springing up within us, without any apparent cause.—*L. Abbott*. Philip subsequently had four daughters, all prophetesses, (Acts 21. 9,) so that the prophetic impulse was familiar perhaps to his interior consciousness.—*Whedon*. Join thyself is not a mere tautology, but expresses something more, to wit, the act of sticking to the chariot, not losing sight of it or leaving it, until the divine purpose was accomplished.—*J. A. Alexander*.

30. Philip ran—With promptness, even with eagerness obeying the divine command. Heard him read . . . Esaias—He reads not in the law or the history, but in the prophets, and of the prophets, in Isaiah, the evangelist of the Old Testament, and in Isaiah, the chapter which contains the clearest revelation of the incarnation.—*L. Abbott*. Understandest thou—The question of Philip, for the purpose of vivacity, contains a play upon words in the Greek, for which the nearest parallel we can invent would be, *Heedest what thou readeſt?*—*Whedon*.

In holy conversation we should come at once to the truth itself. Philip did not begin, as is common, with the weather, the news, etc.—*Bengel*.

31. How can I—Besides the modest self-depreciation of this answer, it implies a suspicion, if no more, that the stranger who so suddenly accosted him was just such a guide and helper as he needed.—*J. A. Alexander*. Come

Revised Version.

30 And Phil'ip ran to him, and heard him reading I-sa'iah the prophet, and said, Understandest thou what 31 thou readeſt? And he said, How can I, except some one shall guide me? And he besought Phil'ip to 32 come up and sit with him. Now the place of the scripture which he was reading was this,

He was led as a sheep to the slaughter;

And as a lamb before his shearer is dumb,

So he openeth not his mouth:

33 In his humiliation his judgement was taken away: His generation who shall declare? For his life is taken from the earth.

up and sit with him—Observe the evidence of the eunuch's earnestness; he comes from Ethiopia to Jerusalem to worship, a long journey; his court duties do not detain him; returning, he studies the word of God on his journey; though he does not understand, he reads and ponders; when explanation is offered he is quick to welcome it.—*L. Abbott*.

32, 33. The place of the Scripture—"The section." When the persecutor, Antiochus, forbade the *law* to be read, the Jews divided the prophets into fifty-four *sections* for reading in the public service.—*Whedon*. Was this—It is as though, in turning over, or perhaps unrolling, the manuscript, this was the passage which, in its strange, touching portraiture of the Man of Sorrows, had riveted his attention, and on which he was consequently dwelling with the prayer that some authorized interpreter would unfold its meaning.—*E. H. Plumptre*. He was led as a sheep—The essential truth taught here by the figures of the sheep and lamb is the quiet non-resistance with which Christ submitted to all the indignity put upon him. The prophecy is fulfilled by his refusal to resist or allow resistance of the officers who came to arrest him, (Matt. 26. 52, 53,) by his patience under the indignity inflicted on him by the servants of the high-priest, (Matt. 26. 67, 68,) and the soldiers of Pilate, (Matt. 27. 27-31,) and by his silence before Pilate (Matt. 27. 12-14) and before Herod. Luke 23. 9. But the context in Isaiah clearly indicates that there is also implied the truth that the Messiah should fulfill by his own death the type afforded by the slaying of sheep as sacrifices

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The first of these is the fact that the
 system is not a simple one. It is a
 complex one, and it is not possible to
 describe it in a simple way. It is a
 system of many parts, and it is not
 possible to describe it in a simple way.

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THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA
 DISTRICT COURT OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA
 In re: [Name], Debtor.
 Chapter 11
 Case No. [Number]

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Authorized Version.

37 And Phil'ip said, 'if thou believest with all thine heart, thou mayest. And he answered and said, I ^s believe that Je'sus Christ is the Son of God.

38 And he commanded the chariot to stand still: and they went down both into the water, both Phil'ip and the eunuch; and he baptized him.

39 And when they were come up out of the water, *the Spirit of the Lord caught away Phil'ip, that the eunuch saw him no more: and he went on his way rejoicing.

Revised Version.

commanded the chariot to stand still: and they both went down into the water, both Phil'ip and the eunuch; and he baptized him. And when they come up out of the water, the Spirit of the Lord caught away Phil'ip; and the eunuch saw him no more, for he went on his way rejoicing. But Phil'ip was

† Matt. 28. 19; Mark 16. 16. — † Matt. 16. 16; John 6. 69; 9. 35; 11. 27; Rom. 10. 10. — † 1 Kings 18. 12; 2 Kings 9. 16; Ezek. 3. 12.

seem to have justified his deferring such a step till he had viewed it in all its bearings, and formed his judgment upon the maturest consideration. But his mind and conscience were convinced, and he would not give opportunity to Satan to get advantage over him; he, therefore, "conferred not with flesh and blood," but gave himself up instantly and unreservedly to God.—*C. Simeon.*

37. If thou believest [This entire verse is omitted in Rev. Ver.].—The authorities against this verse are too strong to permit its insertion. It appears to have been one of those remarkable additions to the text of the Acts, common in some of even our earliest MSS., few of which, however, have found their way into the revised text. This insertion is found as early as Irenæus, (second century,) who quotes it. It appears to have been made to suit the formularies of the baptismal liturgies, it being considered strange that the eunuch should have been baptized without some such confession.—*Alford.* **With all thine heart**—For *with the heart* man believeth unto righteousness. Faith is affectional as well as intellectual. So the eunuch heartily professes that *Jesus, the Messiah, is the Son of God.*—*Whedon.*

38. They went down both—The request was addressed to a large-hearted Hellenist, and was instantly granted, though there were reasons which might have made a James or a Simon hesitate. But in spite of the prohibition of Deuteronomy, Philip saw that the Christian Church was to be an infinitely wider and more spiritual communion than that which had been formed by the Mosaic ritual.—*Farrar.* **Into the water**—The original unquestionably implies a going, not *to*, but *into*, the water; but it does not necessarily imply immersion,

still less complete submersion. The two may have stood in the water, while baptism was performed, either by sprinkling, pouring, or immersion. — *L. Abbott.* Water baptism must have the same *form* with Spirit baptism. The element used affects not the mode. Besides, in the very prophecy which the eunuch had been reading, it is said of Christ, "So shall he sprinkle many nations," (Isa. 52. 15,) that is, by sending down the Holy Spirit. And Jesus had just baptized his soul by the Spirit falling upon him. Philip baptized him as his Saviour had, by the water shed down and falling upon him, thus beautifully picturing (as only thus it can) the heavenly baptism.—*S. S. Journal.*

39. Caught away Philip—The original is correctly rendered by the English version, and seems to me to imply a sudden and supernatural removal of Philip. The expression in 1 Kings 18. 12, and 2 Kings 2. 16, and the disappearance of Christ in Luke 24. 31, interpret the statement here.—*L. Abbott.* Human feeling would have naturally led the teacher to continue his work and to accompany the convert with a view to further instruction; but an impulse so strong and irresistible that it was felt to be from the Spirit of the Lord led Philip to an abrupt and immediate departure. He was literally snatched away from his companion.—*E. H. Plumptre.* **Saw him no more**—He no more saw, nor cared to see, Philip, by reason of joy. He who has obtained the Scripture and Christ can now dispense with a human guide.—*Bengel.* **Went on his way rejoicing**—Joy at the new-found truth prevailed, we believe, over any sorrow at the disappearance of the preacher. Eusebius (*Hist.* 2. 1) speaks of him as returning to his native country, and there preaching "the knowledge of the God of the universe and life-giving abode

Authorized Version.

40 But Phil'ip was found ¹⁰at A-zo'tus: and passing through he preached in all the cities, till he came to Ces'a-re'a.

¹⁰ Zech. 9. 6.

of the Saviour with men," and so fulfilling the words that "Ethiopia should stretch forth her hands unto God." *Psa. 68. 31.—E. H. Plumptre.*

40. Found at Azotus—Or, Ashdod, a city of the Philistines, near the Mediterranean and about midway between Gaza and Joppa. It was never thoroughly subjugated by the Jews; was captured by Tartan, the Assyrian general, (*Isa. 20. 1*), and again by Psammetichus. *Jer. 25. 20.* In the restoration, the daughters of Ashdod became a snare to Israel. *Neh. 13. 23, 24.* In



the New Testament it is mentioned only here; but in early ecclesiastical history, it became the seat of a Christian Church. Its site is now called Esdud, and its ruins contain remains of pottery and other evidences of a former city of considerable size.—*L. Abbott.* Preached in all the cities—The route which Philip would naturally take on this journey led through Lydda and Joppa, and we may probably trace the effect of his labors in the appearance, in chap. 9. 32, 36, of organized and apparently flourishing Christian societies in both these towns.—*E. H. Plumptre.* Cæsarea—There were two towns of this name in Palestine, both named from the Cæsars, one Cæsarea Philippi on the northern borders of the Holy Land, the other, the Cæsarea mentioned here, and sometimes called Cæsarea Palestine.—*L. Abbott.* The historical importance of the city, lying on the line of the great road from Tyre to Egypt, dates, as its name shows, from the Roman period. As described by Strabo, it was known only as Strabo's Tower, with a landing-place for ships. It rose to magnificence, however, under Herod the Great, who built theaters, amphitheaters, and temples, and constructed a harbor as large as the Piræus at Athens. In honor of his imperial patron he named it *Cæsarea Sebaste*, (the latter word meaning *Augusta*.) It appears from chap. 21. 8, that Philip took up his abode there and made it the head-quarters of his work as an evangelist.—*E. H. Plumptre.*

Revised Version.

found at A-zo'tus; and passing through he preached the gospel to all the cities, till he came to Cæs'a-re'a.

'Twas silent all and dead
Beside the barren sea,
Where Philip's steps were led—
Led by a voice from Thee;
He rose and went, nor asked Thee why,
Nor stayed to heave one faithless sigh.

Upon his lonely way
The high-born traveler came,
Reading a mournful lay
Of One who bore our shame,
Silent Himself, His name untold,
And yet his glories were of old.

To muse what heaven might mean,
His wandering brow he raised,
And met an eye serene
That on him watchful gazed;
No hermit e'er so welcome crossed
A child's lone path in woodland lost.

Now wonder turns to love;
The scrolls of sacred lore,
No darksome mazes prove;
The desert tires no more;
They bathe where holy waters flow,
Then on their way rejoicing go.

—John Keble.

Authorities to be Consulted.

Schaff's History of the Apostolic Church. Milman's History of Christianity. Homiletical Monthly, (N. Y.), iii, 522. Arnot on the Parables, 27. Arnot's Church in the House, p. 175. Land and Book, ii, 310. Simeon's Horæ Homileticæ. Edmondson's Short Sermons, 363. Bonar's Bible Thoughts and Themes, iii, 111. The Preacher, (London,) iii, 401. Foster's Cyclopædia of Illustrations, *3886, 7505.

Root Thoughts.

The advancing Gospel. The end of the earth shall surely hear and rejoice in it. Ethiopia stretches forth her hands, and not in vain. Out of Zion, the perfection of beauty, God hath shined. And Ethiopia in her darkness shall behold the light.

In all this advance movement among men and nations the Spirit of God is at work. The Spirit inspired the prophecy. The Spirit brings it into the hands of the Ethiopian. The Spirit directs the preacher. The preacher expounds the prophecy. The Spirit takes away the

preacher when his work is done. It is a good work of the Spirit to remove the human messenger just at the right time. Blessed are they who are so led by divine wisdom as to know when to go, no less certainly than when to come. And this incident is none the less true to human nature when it represents the divine action by which Philip ceased his service as being more emphatic and positive than that by which he came to it. "The Spirit of the Lord caught away Philip."

This scene of Bible study in which we have student and teacher and text-book is very impressive. The eager inquirer. The eager instructor. The eager disciple. He asks, learns, obeys.

The highway is turned into a sanctuary; the chariot into a pulpit; the wayside stream into a baptismal font; the business journey into religious opportunity.

Here is true "hand to hand" work. The right subject; the right handbook; the right guide; the right exposition; the right use of knowledge. Here is no cant; no officious obtrusion; no self-righteous profession; no absurd demonstration; but common sense, earnestness; wisdom, divine direction. And here, too, is the true "joy of salvation."

Busy travelers on train and ship and coach

may in this nineteenth century learn lessons from Philip and Candace's treasurer: that as many now run to and fro over the earth, the knowledge in which are both power and joy may be increased.

Practical Thoughts.

[THE SINCERE TRUTH-SEEKER.]

1. Sincere seekers after truth may be found in any rank, in strange places, and in every race. Ver. 27.
2. The sincere truth-seeker journeys far and seeks diligently to know and worship God. Ver. 27.
3. The sincere truth-seeker studies earnestly and at all times the word of life. Ver. 28.
4. The sincere truth-seeker, needing guidance, will receive it by divine grace. Ver. 29-31.
5. The sincere truth-seeker is willing to receive instruction from any one, even of lowly rank, who can interpret God's word. Ver. 31.
6. The sincere truth-seeker is led by God's word to a knowledge of God's Son. Ver. 32-35.
7. The sincere truth-seeker promptly accepts the truth as it is revealed to him. Ver. 36.
8. The sincere truth-seeker is ready to follow out his conviction in action. Ver. 37, 38.
9. The sincere truth-seeker rejoices in the sure possession of his Saviour.

A. D. 37.]

LESSON III.

[April 15.]

SAUL'S CONVERSION.—Acts 9. 1-18.

GOLDEN TEXT.—And he received sight forthwith, and arose, and was baptized.—ACTS 9. 18.

TIME.—A. D. 37, about the same time with the events of the last lesson.

PLACE.—Damascus in Syria.

INTRODUCTION.—Next to the narrative of the effusion of the Holy Ghost at Pentecost, this is the most important section of the Acts of the Apostles. We have in it the account of the conversion of the greatest defender and the most successful missionary of the Christian faith; a man who, beyond all the apostles, has indelibly impressed his name and spirit upon Christianity, and especially upon Protestantism, and who has thus, of all men, exerted the mightiest influence upon the world. Besides numerous allusions to the event in the epistles of Paul, we have three separate accounts of it in the Acts; the first is the narrative of Luke, now under consideration; the second is contained in the speech of Paul before the Jewish multitude at Jerusalem, (Acts 22. 4-16;) and the third forms part of his defense before King Agrippa. Acts 26. 12-18. These accounts agree in the principal particulars, but differ in subordinate details, thus affording that mark of internal credibility—substantial truth combined with circumstantial variety; and this is the case whether the difference between the accounts be capable or incapable of reconciliation. They also mutually supply what is wanting in each other, and complete the history.—*P. J. Gloag.*

Authorized Version.

1 And 'Saul, yet breathing out threatenings and slaughter against the disci-

1 Chap. 8. 3; Gal. 1. 13; 1 Tim. 1. 13.

Revised Version.

9 But Saul, yet breathing threatening and slaughter against the disciples of

1. And Saul [See note, First Quarter, Lesson XI, on "the early life of Saul."]—About

the same time that Philip was plodding alone on the desert way from Jerusalem to Gaza, the

Authorized Version.

ples of the Lord, went unto the high priest,

2 And desired of him letters to Da-mas'cus to the synagogues, that if he found any ^a of this way, whether they were men or women, he might bring them bound unto Je-ru'sa-lem.

3 And ² as he journeyed, he came near Da-mas'cus: and suddenly there shined round about him a light from heaven:

^a Of the way; chap. 19, 9.—² Chap. 22, 6; 26, 12; 1 Cor. 15, 8.

fiery young Pharisee was riding with his retinue in the opposite direction through the Syrian desert.—*W. Smith. Breathing out* [Rev. Ver. omits out.]—Not breathing out, nor exhaling, nor inhaling, but *inwardly breathing*, referring rather to his temper—his inner atmosphere of soul—than to his external manifestations.—*Whedon. Threatenings* [Rev. Ver., *threatening.*] **Went unto the high-priest**—The high-priest—in all probability Theophilus, who was promoted by Vitellius at the pentecost of A. D. 37—was a Sadducee, and a son of the hated house of Hanan, (Annas.)—*F. W. Farrar.*

The Lord our God is an artificer, who takes pleasure only in performing a very difficult work, or one that is not of a trivial character; and he most of all delights to work on the raw material. He has, therefore, at all times preferred very hard wood and very hard stones, and then the masterpieces which he produces exhibit his great skill.—*Luther.*

2. **Desired of him letters** [Rev. Ver., *Asked of him.*]—Through all the Jewish dispersion the high-priest judged of heresy,* imprisoned, scourged, summoned to Jerusalem, and excommunicated—every thing but executed, unless by daring violence. Hence the high-priest was now a Jewish pope, with his Sanhedrim as his cardinals, with a sway as wide as the Roman Empire. **Damascus**—Perhaps the most ancient, and certainly one of the most beautiful, cities, as seen from without, in the world. It was a well-known town in the time of Abraham. Lying in the great route of commerce between Egypt, Persia, and India, a green oasis in a desert of sand, watered by the plentiful streams of the Abana and Barada, it was celebrated for its commercial wealth and for the magnificence of its gardens. During much of the Old Testament times it was a capital of a region of very variable extent, called *Syria*, ruled mostly by kings of the line of Ben-hadad. It was con-

Revised Version.

the Lord, went unto the high priest, 2 and asked of him letters to Da-mas'cus unto the synagogues, that if he found any that were of the Way, whether men or women, he might bring them bound to Je-ru'sa-lem. 3 And as he journeyed, it came to pass that he drew nigh unto Da-mas'cus: and suddenly there shone round about 4 him a light out of heaven: and he

quered by David, but briefly held by his successors. It stands about a hundred and forty miles north-east from Jerusalem. At this day it is one of the largest of eastern cities, with one hundred and fifty thousand inhabitants, nearly two thousand Christian.—*Whedon.* In ordinary times when that Jewish autonomy, which always meant Jewish intolerance, was repressed within stern limits by the Roman government, it would have been impossible to carry out so cruel a commission. This might have been urged as an insuperable difficulty if an incidental expression in 2 Cor. 11. 32 had not furnished a clew in explanation of the circumstances. From this it appears that at this time the city was more or less in the hands of Aretas or Hareth, the powerful Emir of Petra.—*Farrar.* And Aretas is known to have been an intimate friend of the high-priest Theophilus, according to Josephus. **To the synagogues**—That is, to the *presidents* of the synagogues, who would acknowledge the orders of the Sanhedrim, and could, under the authority of the Ethnarch, 'carry them out.—*Alford. Of this way* [Rev. Ver., *Of the way.*]

—We have here the first occurrence of a term which seems to have been used familiarly as a synonym for the disciples of Christ. Chaps. 19, 9, 23; 22, 4; 24, 14, 22. It may have originated in the words in which Christ had claimed to be himself the "Way," as well as the "Truth" and the "Life," (John 14. 6;) or in his language as to the "strait way" that led to eternal life. Matt. 7. 13.—*E. H. Plumptre.* **Men or women**—The reference to *women* shows the bitterness of the persecution, which did not spare even the gentle and helpless. **Bring them bound**—To await such mercy as Stephen's murder might lead them to hope for at the hands of the supreme tribunal.—*Farrar.*

3. **As he journeyed**—The journey from Jerusalem was probably made on the Roman road, that is, that of the Itineraries, by Neapolis (Sichem) and Scythopolis, crossing the Jordan south of the lake Tiberias, Gadara, and so to

Authorized Version.

4 And he fell to the earth, and heard a voice saying unto him, Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me?

5 And he said, 'Who art thou, Lord? And the Lord said, I am Je'sus whom thou persecutest. ⁶It is hard for thee to kick against the pricks.

³ Matt. 25, 40; 1 Cor. 12, 12; Eph. 5, 30.—⁴ 1 Tim. 1, 13.—
⁵ Chap. 5, 39.

Damascus. Or he might have joined—either the Petra road, by Jericho and Heshbon, and so by Botsrah to Damascus, or the Egyptian caravan track, which passes to the north of the lake of Tiberias, and near Cæsarea Philippi. In either case the journey would occupy from five to six days, the distance being 180 to 150 miles.—*Alford*. He came near Damascus—The beauty of Damascus when



seen at a distance is illustrated by the legend that Mohammed once, on approaching the city, turned resolutely away after gazing upon it, saying, "Man can have but one paradise, and my paradise is fixed above."—*L. Abbott*. A light from heaven [Rev. Ver., *Out of heaven*.]—This was the shekinah or divine luster of the person of the glorified Jesus, beheld also by the dying Stephen, and magnificently described by the Apocalyptist in Rev. 1. 13-17. Those who have had experience of the glare of a mid-day sun in the East will best understand the description of that light, which is said to have been "a light above the brightness of the sun, shining round about Paul and them that journeyed with him." All fell to the ground in terror, (26. 14,) or stood dumb with amazement. 9. 7. Suddenly surrounded by a light so terrible and incomprehensible, "they were afraid." "They heard not the voice of him that spake to Paul," (chap. 22. 9;) or, if they heard a voice, "they saw no man." chap. 9. 7. The whole scene was evidently one of the utmost confusion, and the accounts are such as to express, in the most striking manner, the bewilderment and alarm of the travelers.—*Conybeare and Howson*.

4. He fell to the earth—If he were not on foot, this was, in all likelihood, from the back of a camel, not of a horse, as painters have usually represented it.—*Canon Cook*. Heard a voice—While the others were stunned, stupefied, and confused, a clear light broke terribly on the soul of one of those who were prostrated on the

Revised Version.

fell upon the earth, and heard a voice saying unto him, Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me? And he said, Who art thou, Lord? And he said, I am Je'sus whom thou persecutest:

ground. A voice spoke articulately to him, which to the rest was a sound mysterious and indistinct. He heard what they did not hear. He saw what they did not see. To them the awful sound was without a meaning; he heard the voice of the Son of God. To them it was a bright light which suddenly surrounded them; he saw *Jesus*, whom he was persecuting.—*Conybeare and Howson*. Why persecutest—Observe the form of the question, Why persecutest thou *me*? Not my disciples, nor my Church. "Paul strikes in Damascus; Christ suffers in heaven."—*Hall*.

As unskillful hunters, shooting at wild beasts, may kill a man, so those that shoot at the saints hit Christ. Their sufferings are held his, (Col. 1. 24; their reproach his, (Heb. 13. 13.) God is more provoked than Nehemiah. Neh. 4. 3, 5. Christ retaineth still compassion, though freed from personal passion; and, though freed from feeling, he hath still yet a fellow-feeling.—*Trapp*.

5. Who art thou—Observe that Saul does not yield allegiance to the unknown speaker until he has questioned him, and, by the disclosure of Saul's secret uneasiness, (see next verse,) the speaker has given evidence of divine omniscience. They entirely misread Saul's character and the narrative here, who attribute the change in him to the effect of mere terror.—*L. Abbott*. Lord—The word "Lord" could not as yet have been used in all the fullness of its meaning. As in many cases in the Gospels, it was the natural utterance of respect and awe, (John 5. 7; 9. 36; 20. 15,) such as would be roused by what the persecutor saw and heard.—*E. H. Plumptre*. I am Jesus—Had he then said to him, "I am the Son of God, the Word that was in the beginning, he who made the heaven," Saul might have said, "That is not he whom I am persecuting." Had he uttered to him those vast and bright and lofty titles, Saul might have said, "This is not the crucified." But that he may know that he is persecuting him who was made flesh, who took the form of a servant, who died, was buried, naming

Authorized Version.

6 And he, trembling and astonished, said, Lord, ⁶ what wilt thou have me to do ? And the Lord *said* unto him, Arise, and go into the city, and it shall be told thee what thou must do.

7 And ⁷ the men which journeyed with him stood speechless, hearing a voice, but seeing no man.

8 And Saul arose from the earth; and when his eyes were opened, he saw no

* Luke 3. 10; chap. 2. 37; 16. 30.—† Dan. 10. 7.

himself from the earthly place, he says, "I am Jesus of Nazareth whom thou persecutest."—*Farrar*. Whom thou persecutest—It was not the disciples and brethren alone whom Saul was persecuting. What was done to them the Lord counted as done unto himself. Matt. 10. 40.—*E. H. Plumptre*. It is hard for thee, etc. [This sentence is omitted in the Rev. Ver.]—There is a decisive preponderance of MS. authority against the appearance of these words here, and the conclusion of nearly all critics is that they have been inserted in the later MSS. from chap. 26. 14.—*E. H. Plumptre*. To kick against the pricks—As on earth he had always spoken in parables, so it was now. That voice which had drawn lessons from the lilies that grew in Galilee, and from the birds that flew over the mountain slopes near the sea of Tiberias, was now pleased to call His last apostle with a figure of the like significance. As the ox rebels in vain against the goad of its master, and as all its struggles do naught but increase its distress, so is thy rebellion vain against the power of my grace.—*Conybeare and Howson*. What were those goads? There were no conceivable goads for him to resist, except those which were wielded by his own conscience. The stings of conscience, the anguish of a constant misgiving, inflicted wounds which should have told him long before that he was advancing in a wrong path.—*Farrar*.

6. Trembling and astonished—This clause, and the question, "Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?" are omitted in the Rev. Ver., and the answer "Rise," etc., is connected directly with the words, "I am Jesus whom thou persecutest." Lord, what wilt thou—We note (1) the use of the word "Lord," now, we must believe, with a new meaning, as applied to the Nazarene whom he had before despised. (2) The entire surrender of his own will to that of him whom he thus recognized as commanding his allegiance. At that moment Christ was formed in him, (Gal. 1. 16;) the new man came to life.

Revised Version.

6 but rise, and enter into the city, and it shall be told thee what thou must
7 do. And the men that journeyed with him stood speechless, hearing the
8 ¹ voice, but beholding no man. And Saul arose from the earth; and when his eyes were opened, he saw nothing;

¹ Or, sound.

He lived in Christ, and Christ in him.—*E. H. Plumptre*. Have me to do—"He does not," says Stier, "wail out, 'Ah! Lord, what have I done?'" It may be a deep repentance that ruminates in sorrow over the past; but it is a more effective repentance that seeks, as far as possible, to undo the past by the most earnest use of the future.—*Whedon*. It shall be told thee—Paul received his apostolical dignity, and the necessary qualifications afterward, from the Lord himself; but it was ordered that he should become a *Christian* in the ordinary way, that is, by the ministry of others.—*Rieger*.

7. Stood speechless, hearing a voice—We are told by Paul himself (chap. 22. 9) that "they did *not* hear the voice." What is meant is clearly that they did not hear the words, could attach no meaning to the sounds, which for Saul himself had so profound a significance. So, in like manner, they saw the light, but did not see the form. In chap. 26. 14 they also are said to have fallen on the ground in terror.—*E. H. Plumptre*.

8. Saul arose from the earth—Saul arose another man; he had fallen in death, he rose in life; he had fallen in the midst of things temporal, he rose in awful consciousness of the things eternal; he had fallen a proud, intolerant, persecuting Jew, he rose a humble, broken-hearted, penitent Christian. In that moment a new element had been added to his being. Henceforth—to use his own deep and dominant expression—he was "in Christ."—*Farrar*. Saw no man [Rev. Ver., *Saw nothing*.]—"Saw no one," signifies not merely that he no longer saw the divine Person with whom he had been speaking, but he was no longer able to see at all. *L. Abbott*. The blindness was that of one who has been dazzled with excess of light, (compare chap. 22. 11,) the natural result of the vision of the supernatural glory, a witness to the man himself that the vision was not a mere play of imagination.—*E. H. Plumptre*. Led him by the hand—Here the blind led the blind; those

Authorized Version.

man: but they led him by the hand, and brought *him* into Da-mas'cus.

9 And he was three days without sight, and neither did eat nor drink.

10 And there was a certain disciple at Da-mas'cus, named An'a-ni'as; and to him said the Lord in a vision, An'a-ni'as. And he said, Behold, I *am here*, Lord.

11 And the Lord *said* unto him,

very hands led him to Damascus which should have haled the saints from Damascus to Jerusalem.—*Burkitt*. Brought him to Damascus—He had meant to enter the city in all the importance of a commissioner from the Sanhedrim, to be received with distinction, not only as himself a great “pupil of the wise,” but even as a representative of all authority which the Jews held most sacred. How different was his actual entrance! He is led through the city gate, stricken, dejected, trembling, no longer breathing threats and slaughter, but longing only to be the learner and the suppliant, and the lowest brother among those whom he had intended to destroy.—*Farrar*.

9. Three days . . . neither did eat nor drink—Some suppose that this was a voluntary fast in token of his deep humiliation for the guilt he had contracted; but it is much more probable that it was the result of the concentration of his mind on spiritual objects. Paul was so deeply affected by all that he had seen and heard—he was then passing through such a great spiritual crisis—that for a time he appeared to be entirely withdrawn from the external world.—*P. J. Gloag*. We can hardly be wrong in referring the visions and revelations of the Lord, the soaring as to the third heaven, and the paradise of God, of which he speaks fourteen or fifteen years later, to this period. 2 Cor. 12. 1-4. The conditions of outward life were suspended, and he lived as one fallen into a trance—in the ecstasy of an apocalyptic rapture.—*E. H. Plumptre*.

It is a usual method with God to lay the foundation of a great sanctity in affliction.—*Bishop Ken*.

10. A certain disciple—In chap. 22. 12 Paul speaks of him as a “devout man,” (the same word as in chaps. 2. 5; 8. 2,) “according to the law,” well reported of by all the Jews who dwelt at Damascus.—*E. H. Plumptre*. It is noticeable that the greatest of the apostles was shown the way of salvation by an obscure private member of the Church. At

Revised Version.

and they led him by the hand, and brought him into Da-mas'cus. And he was three days without sight, and did neither eat nor drink.

10 Now there was a certain disciple at Da-mas'cus, named An'a-ni'as; and the Lord said unto him in a vision, An'a-ni'as. And he said, Behold, I *am here*, Lord. And the Lord *said* unto him, Arise, and go to

Damascus—Where he may have taken refuge from the persecution at Jerusalem or may have been a resident, converted through some one who had been present on the day of Pentecost at Jerusalem. In a vision—This would indicate that the words were uttered by a visible speaker. I am here, Lord—The ready acceptance of the command seems to imply either personal discipleship or previous visions of the same nature.—*E. H. Plumptre*.



The Street called Straight.

11. The street . . . called straight—A street answering to this description still runs from the Eastern Gate to the palace of the Pasha, and is known locally as the “Street of Bazaars.”—*E. H. Plumptre*. In the house of

Authorized Version.

Arise, and go into the street which is called Straight, and inquire in the house of Ju'das for one called Saul, of ^a Tar'sus: for, behold, he prayeth,

12 And hath seen in a vision a man named An'a-ni'as coming in, and putting *his* hand on him, that he might receive his sight.

13 Then An'a-ni'as answered, Lord, I have heard by many of this man, how much evil he hath done to thy saints at Je-ru'sa-lem:

14 And here he hath authority from the chief priest to bind all that ^a call on thy name.

^a Chap. 21, 39.—^a Chap. 7, 59; 22, 16; 1 Cor. 1, 2; 2 Tim. 2, 22.

Judas—Nothing more is known of him; it is hardly probable that he was a Christian. The surmise of Dr. Wolcott, that he kept a public-house, in which case he must probably be known at least by reputation to Ananias, is reasonable.—*L. Abbott.* One called Saul of Tarsus—The passage is memorable as the first mention of the apostle's birthplace.—*E. H. Plumptre.* Tarsus was the capital of the province of Cilicia, a large and populous city in a fruitful plain on the River Cydnus, which flowed through the midst of it with a swift stream of remarkably cold water. Strabo speaks most highly of its eminence in schools of philosophy, and says that they excelled those even of Athens and Alexandria. He enumerates many learned men who had sprung from it. It was a "free city," that is, one which, though under Rome, lived under its own laws and chose its own magistrates. This freedom was granted to it by Antony; and much later we find it a Roman colony. It is now a town with about 20,000 inhabitants, and is described as being a den of poverty, filth, and ruins. There are many remains of the old town.—*L. Abbott.* He prayeth—Estimating that prayer by that which came as the answer to it, we may think of it as including pardon for the past, light and wisdom for the future, strength to do the work to which he was now called, intercession for those whom he had before persecuted unto the death.—*E. H. Plumptre.*

What an exact knowledge the Lord has of particular places: he tells Ananias in what city Saul was, in what street he was, in whose house he was. It is a matter of consolation to the children of God to remember that God knows them, knows their persons, knows their purposes, knows their performances, knows their place of abode, that

Revised Version.

the street which is called Straight, and inquire in the house of Ju'das for one named Saul, a man of Tar'-

12 sus: for behold, he prayeth; and he hath seen a man named An'a-ni-as coming in, and laying his hands on him, that he might receive his sight.

13 But An'a-ni'as answered, Lord, I have heard from many of this man, how much evil he did to thy saints

14 at Je-ru'sa-lem: and here he hath authority from the chief priests to bind all that call upon thy name.

he knows who they are, what they do, and where they dwell.—*Burkitt.*

God's people are so dear to him that their walls are ever before him, (Isa. 49, 16;) he loveth the streets the better they dwell in, the air the better they breathe in. Psa. 87, 5, 6.—*Trapp.*

12. Hath seen in a vision [Rev. Ver. omits *in a vision*.]—While Ananias was receiving a celestial communication in one part of the city, Saul had received one in another. The coincidence of two distinct communications, at or near the same time, and for the same purpose, but to different persons, while it served to prepare them for a subsequent meeting, tended also to preclude the supposition of an accident or mere imagination.—*J. A. Alexander.* A man named Ananias—A man whom he had never seen before, but whom he at once knew to be Ananias.

13, 14. Ananias answered—The words do not seem to be the expression of reluctance, but of astonishment, as if he had said, "Is it possible that I should be sent by my Lord to Saul of Tarsus, the violent opponent of the Christians—Saul, who was coming here to persecute the disciples?"—*P. J. Gloag.* I have heard—Perhaps those who fled from Jerusalem to Damascus had informed him of Saul: He may have heard of his purpose by letters from Jerusalem, or Saul's companions may have mentioned it, for it was now three days since they arrived, and the strange events attending their coming could hardly fail to be rumored abroad. By many [Rev. Ver., *From many*.] To thy saints—This is noticeable as the first application of the term "saints" to the disciples. The primary idea of the word was that of men who consecrated themselves, and led, in the strictest sense

Authorized Version.

15 But the Lord said unto him, Go thy way: for ¹⁰he is a chosen vessel unto me, to bear my name before ¹¹the Gen'tiles, and ¹²kings, and the children of Is-ra-el:

16 For ¹³I will show him how great things he must suffer for my name's sake.

17 And ¹⁴An'a-ni'as went his way, and entered into the house; and putting his hands on him, said, Brother Saul, the Lord, *even* Je'sus, that appeared unto thee in the way as thou camest, hath sent me, that thou mightest receive thy sight, and ¹⁵be filled with the Holy Ghost.

Revised Version.

15 But the Lord said unto him, Go thy way: for he is a ²chosen vessel unto me, to bear my name before the Gen'tiles and kings, and the children of

16 Is-ra'el: for I will shew him how many things he must suffer for my

17 name's sake. And An'a-ni'as departed, and entered into the house; and laying his hands on him said, Brother Saul, the Lord, *even* Je'sus, who appeared unto thee in the way which thou camest, hath sent me, that thou mayest receive thy sight, and be filled with the Holy Ghost.

¹⁰ Chap. 13. 2; 22. 21; 26. 17; Rom. 1. 1; 1 Cor. 15. 10; Gal. 1. 15; Eph. 3. 7; 1 Tim. 2. 7; 2 Tim. 1. 11.—¹¹ Rom. 1. 5; 11. 13; Gal. 2. 7, 8.—¹² Chap. 25. 22; 26. 1.—¹³ Chap. 20. 23; 21. 11; 2 Cor. 11. 23.—¹⁴ Chap. 22. 12.—¹⁵ Chap. 2. 4; 13. 52.

² Gr. vessel of election.

of the word, a devout life.—*E. H. Plumptre.* **Here he hath authority**—It could hardly fail to have been notified to the Christians at Damascus, by their brethren at Jerusalem, that Saul was on his way to persecute them.—*Alford.* These words of Ananias show a childlike candor and simplicity, as well as a confidential intercourse between himself and his Saviour.

15. Vessel—The term translated "vessel" is used in the Old Testament of arms, (Gen. 27. 3,) of garments, (Deut. 22. 5,) of household goods, (Gen. 31. 56.) In the New Testament its range of meaning is yet wider, as in Matt. 12. 29; Luke 8. 16; John 19. 29; Rom. 9. 22; 2 Cor. 4. 7. Here our word "instrument" or "implement" comes, perhaps, nearest to its meaning. The persecutor had been chosen by the Lord as the "tool" with which he would work out his gracious will for him and for the Gentiles.—*E. H. Plumptre.* **To bear my name**—This defines the object for which Saul was chosen, and the verse, taken as a whole, indicates rather that every Christian's work is allotted to him by God, than that he is chosen by God to be a special subject of redeeming grace.—*L. Abbott.* **Before the Gentiles**—This commission was repeated subsequently in Jerusalem, (chap. 22. 21,) and fulfilled, as regards the Gentiles and Israelites, by Paul's whole missionary life, and as regards kings, by his appearance before Agrippa, (chap. 26,) and probably before Nero.—*L. Abbott.*

While Ananias looked at Saul the Lord was looking at Paul; while Ananias spoke of a persecutor God was taking knowledge of a preacher, and while he pointed to him as a tare, fit only to be burned up, Christ was gathering him into his

heavenly barn as a vessel of election unto honor.—*Peter Chrysologus.*

16. For—This word has reference to something intermediate, implied, but not expressed. The connecting thought may be, "Nor is he to be merely active in my service, but passive also, for I will show him, etc."—*J. A. Alexander.* **How great things** [Rev. Ver., *How many things.*] **He must suffer**—He who had hitherto made others to suffer for the truth was now to suffer for it in his turn. There is an exquisite mixture of severity and tenderness in this disclosure: of severity in sentencing this "chosen vessel" to endure as well as to labor; of tenderness in intimating that this purpose, though explicitly declared to Ananias, was to be more gradually made known to the sufferer himself.—*J. A. Alexander.* With characters of a lower type, the prospect of what they will have to suffer in any enterprise tends to deter them from embarking on it. With such a one as Saul of Tarsus, now repenting of the sufferings he had inflicted on others, that prospect would be welcome as enabling him, so far as that was possible, if not to atone for the past, at least to manifest fruits worthy of his repentance.—*E. H. Plumptre.*

17. Brother Saul—The tender Christian epithet for the late murderous persecutor. Repentant it was, no doubt, as well as tender; for Ananias knew that this man was a future apostle, with the Gentile world for his wide mission.—*Whedon.* **Jesus, that appeared unto thee**—Christ himself, then, appeared to Paul on his way to Damascus. He saw him and heard his words. This, which may be inferred from the

Authorized Version.

18 And immediately there fell from his eyes as it had been scales: and he received sight forthwith, and arose, and was baptized.

account here and elsewhere, is directly stated in Acts 9. 27; 1 Cor. 9. 1; 15. 8. **Filled with the Holy Ghost** [See notes First Quarter, Lesson II, verse 4, and Second Quarter, Lesson I, verse 17.]—From this it would seem that Paul received the Holy Ghost by the laying on of the hands of Ananias. Elsewhere it appears to have been the function of the apostles to bestow the miraculous influences of the Spirit; but Paul did not receive them through the apostles, because he was to occupy an independent position, in order that his gospel might be seen not to be of man, but of God.—*P. J. Gloag.*

The mantle of the first of the martyrs fell upon the last of the apostles.—*J. Ford.*

18. There fell from his eyes—The description suggests the thought that the blindness was caused by an incrustation, caused by acute inflammation, covering the pupil of the eye, or closing up the eye-lids. Like phenomena are mentioned by Hippocrates, and the cure with which Luke records the fact in this instance may be noted, with chaps. 3. 7; 28. 8, as one of the examples of the technical precision of his calling as a physician.—*E. H. Plumptre.* **Was baptized**—It may be inferred, almost as a matter of certainty, that it was at the hands of Ananias that he received baptism.—*E. H. Plumptre.*

The conversion and apostleship of Paul alone, duly considered, is of itself a demonstration sufficient to prove Christianity to be a divine revelation.—*Lord Lyttleton.*

Authorities to be Consulted.

Schaff's History of the Apostolic Church, 226. Farrar's St. Paul, chap. x. Conybeare and Howson's St. Paul, chap. iii. Smith's New Testament History, 401. Milman's History of Christianity, i, 368. Keble's Christian Year. Preacher's Lantern, i, 697. Pulpit Analyst, iii, 355. Freeman's Bible Manners and Customs, No. 225. For a comparison of the accounts of Saul's conversion see Lyman Abbott's Commentary, p. 111. Foster's Cyclopaedia of Illustrations, [Figures marked with a star refer to poetical volumes.] *3861, *3864, 7521, *1975, 2234, 11845, 2554.

Root Thoughts.

The lightning of God among the high places of Israel! The people felt it when it swept in

Revised Version.

18 And straightway there fell from his eyes as it were scales, and he received his sight; and he arose and was baptized.

Pentecostal currents. The lame man was healed by it. The sacrilegious Ananias and Sapphira were smitten by it. It gave victory and vision to Stephen. It scathed Simon the sorcerer. It saved the Ethiopian. Now it sweeps among the heights of personal power. Saul of Tarsus falls before and rises by it. The dagger of persecution in his hand is transformed into a cross which he holds up before all the ages—sign of God's power over human scholarship, prejudice, and purpose.

Christianity is adapted to all types of character. It convinces. It reaches consciousness and conscience, and opens the most interior chambers of the soul to its self-evidencing light. It thus reaches all men, all classes of men—sage and simpleton. It is a system of great facts, historical and experimental. It touches the extremes of society beyond the line of mere taste or learning. It lifts the lame beggar at the gate of the temple and fells the pitiless persecutor at the gate of Damascus. It gives awakening to the worldly, spiritual sensitiveness to the carnal, guidance to the submissive, and vision to the blind.

Saul's faith, to begin with, was greater than was that of Ananias. And this was the beginning of a mighty and wonder-working faith. He was colossal at the start, "a chosen vessel" to bear the name of Christ "before kings."

Practical Thoughts.

[CHRIST AS REVEALED IN SAUL'S CONVERSION.]

1. The conversion of Saul reveals a Saviour, who, though he was dead, yet now lives. Vers. 3, 4.
2. It reveals a Saviour who, though in heaven, yet notices and takes interest in men and actions on the earth. Vers. 4, 5.
3. It reveals a Saviour whose sympathy with his people is so complete that he feels their wrongs more keenly than he felt his own. Vers. 4, 5.
4. It reveals a Saviour who knows by name and individually both his enemies and his friends. Vers. 4, 5.
5. It reveals a Saviour whose love is such that it can seek out and embrace even the bitterest of his enemies. Vers. 4, 5.
6. It reveals a Saviour whose power is such that he can make his mightiest adversary the

instrument of his greatest triumphs. Vers. 4, 5, 6.

7. It reveals a Saviour whose notice of things on earth is so precise that he knows the very streets and houses where his followers live. Vers. 10, 11.

8. It reveals a Saviour who is tender toward the doubts and fears of his followers, and ready to relieve them. Vers. 13-15.

9. It reveals a Saviour who can see the good that is in men, and the possibilities of usefulness in even a sinner. Vers. 15, 16.

A. D. 37.]

LESSON IV.

[April 22.]

SAUL PREACHING CHRIST.—Acts 9. 19-31.

GOLDEN TEXT.—He which persecuted us in times past now preacheth the faith which once he destroyed.—GAL. 1. 23.

TIME.—A period of about three years is included in this lesson, from A. D. 37, immediately following the last lesson, to A. D. 39 or 40.

PLACES.—Damascus in Syria, Jerusalem in Judea, and Tarsus in Asia Minor.

INTRODUCTION.—The following appears to have been the series of events: Paul, immediately after his conversion, spent a few days with the disciples at Damascus, preaching Christ in the synagogues of the Jews. Vers. 19-22. Soon afterward, urged by an internal impulse, he went to Arabia, where he spent two or three years in retirement, preparing himself for his great mission. Gal. 1. 15-17. Then he returned to Damascus, and spent some time longer there preaching the Gospel. Ver. 23. Afterward, in consequence of a plot of the Jews against his life, he effected his escape, and betook himself to Jerusalem. Vers. 24, 25. It is probable that the greater part of the three years was spent, not in Damascus, but in Arabia; for it is to his residence in Arabia that Paul himself gives the greater prominence. Damascus is only incidentally mentioned by him. This also best accounts for the cold reception which he received from the disciples in Jerusalem.—*P. J. Gloag.* [With this agree Conybeare and Howson, Alford, Lange, Neander, Paley, Hackett, Wordsworth, L. Abbott, and Whedon. The journey to Arabia is placed before the preaching in Damascus by Schaff, Farrar, and Plumptre.] Instead of assuming at once, as his abilities and character might seem to command, a distinguished place in the new community into which he had been received; instead of being hailed as renegades from the opposite faction usually are by a weak and persecuted party, his early course is lost in obscurity. He passes several years in exile, as it were, from both parties; he emerges by slow degrees into eminence, and hardly wins his way into the reluctant confidence of the Christians, who, however they might at first be startled by the improbability of the fact, yet felt such reliance in the power of their Lord and Redeemer, as scarcely we should have conceived to be effected by lasting wonder at the conversion of any unbeliever.—*H. H. Milman.*

Authorized Version.

19 And when he had received meat, he was strengthened. ¹ Then was Saul certain days with the disciples which were at Da-mas'cus.

20 And straightway he preached Christ

¹ Chap. 26, 20.

19. Received meat.—[Rev. Ver., *He took food.*]—After three days of fasting, sleeplessness, and mental excitement, Saul was in a weak physical condition, and in need of food and rest. **Then was Saul certain days.**—A few days of quiet, and becoming acquainted with those as brethren whom he came to persecute as infidels, but not to learn from them the Gospel, (for this he did not receive from man, neither was he taught it.) Gal. 1. 12.—*Alford.* **With the disciples at Damascus.**—Whence were these first

Revised Version.

19 And he took food and was strengthened.

And he was certain days with the disciples which were at Da-mas'cus.

20 And straightway in the synagogues

fruits of Christ already at Damascus? They may have been (1) Jews who had heard our Lord preach, and had removed to Damascus. (2) Devout persons present at the Pentecost, then for awhile sojourning in Jerusalem. Chap. 2. 5. (3) Refugees scattered by the persecution of chap. 8. 1-4. Without doubt, Ananias would introduce him to them; he acted the same part at Damascus which Barnabas afterward did at Jerusalem.—*P. J. Gloag.*

20. Straightway [See the Introduction to

Authorized Version.

in the synagogues, ²that he is the Son of God.

21 But all that heard him were amazed, and said, ³Is not this he that destroyed them which called on this name in Je-ru'sa-lem, and came hither for that intent, that he might bring them bound unto the chief priests?

22 But Saul increased the more in strength, and ⁴confounded the Jews which dwelt at Da-mas'cus, proving that this is very Christ.

9 Chap. 8. 37.—3 Chap. 8. 3; Gal. 1. 13.—4 Chap. 18. 23.

this lesson for order of events. With the order as there given the Revised Version seems to agree, from its division of the paragraphs.]—This promptitude saved him from many difficulties which else would have beset his course. It raised his conversion above suspicion. It confirmed his faith. It enlarged his knowledge. It opened his way. It gave him an advantage against any who might be his enemies. It put him in possession of the ground. It made retreat more difficult. It made him a fit and profitable example for all who are beginning the Christian course, to the end of time.—*A. Raleigh.* **He preached Christ** [Rev. Ver., *In the synagogues he preached Jesus.*]—The best manuscripts have here *Jesus* instead of *Christ*. And the difference is not merely verbal. What Saul preached was not the doctrine that the Jewish Messiah was the Son of God, but the fact that Jesus of Nazareth was the Son of God, and the long-promised Messiah, "the very Christ." Ver. 22.—*L. Abbott.* **In the synagogues**—He appeared in the synagogues, but for a different purpose from that for which he came up from Jerusalem; not to deliver his letters of authority from the chief priests, and to arrest the Christians; but to proclaim that faith which he came to Damascus to destroy.—*P. J. Gloag.* It is probable that at this time the Christians met with other Jews in the regular worship of the synagogues, besides holding their own meetings apart. **That he is the Son of God**—What he had to proclaim was, first, that the Christ was actually and verily Son of God no less than the Son of David; and, secondly, that Jesus of Nazareth had been shown to be the Christ.—*E. H. Plumptre.*

21. **Were astonished**—The astonishment here spoken of was that of the unbelieving Jews, not of the Christians who had already been in-

Revised Version.

he proclaimed Je'sus, that he is the 21 Son of God. And all that heard him were amazed, and said, Is not this he that in Je-ru'sa-lem made havock of them which called on this name? and he had come hither for this intent, that he might bring them bound 22 before the chief priests. But Saul increased the more in strength, and confounded the Jews which dwelt at Da-mas'cus, proving that this is the Christ.

formed of Saul's conversion.—*P. J. Gloag.* **And said**—As Chrysostom observes, not to Saul himself, whom they were afraid or ashamed to question, but to themselves or one another.—*J. A. Alexander.* **Destroyed them** [Rev. Ver., *Is not this he that in Jerusalem made havock, etc.*]—See Notes, First Quarter, Lesson II, ver. 3. **Came hither for that intent**—The report of his coming to Damascus as a persecutor of the Christians had preceded him; but instead of putting his letters of authority into execution, he had been transformed from a persecutor to a Christian evangelist, and publicly avowed his belief in the Messiahship of Jesus.—*P. J. Gloag.*

22. **Increased the more in strength**—In all the elements of moral and spiritual strength, the ardor of his convictions, the resolution of his purpose, the clearness of his apprehension of the new interpretation of the Old Testament, and the peculiar and indefinable strength that comes from singleness of purpose and communion with God. For his own interpretation of this phrase see Eph. 3. 16-19.—*L. Abbott.* I regard the expression, "Saul increased the more in strength," as the only words beneath which can lie concealed the journey to Arabia. Paul mentions this journey (Gal. 1. 17) with no obscure hint that to it was to be assigned the reception by him, in full measure, of the Gospel which he preached. And such a reception would certainly give rise to the great accession of power here recorded.—*Alford.* **Confounded the Jews**—Being learned in their law, he stopped their mouths and suffered them not to speak; they thought that they had got rid of such arguments in getting rid of Stephen, and, behold! they found another arguer more powerful than Stephen.—*Chrysostom.* There is nothing to indicate that this his first preaching was successful, except in compelling

Authorized Version.

23 And after that many days were fulfilled, ⁵the Jews took counsel to kill him:

24 But their laying await was known

⁵ Chap. 23. 12; 25. 3.

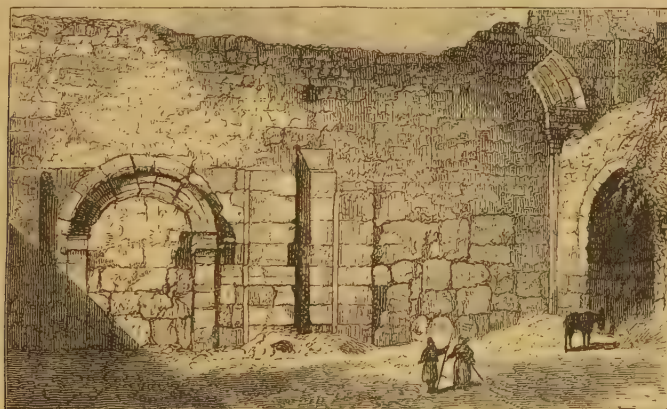
the Jews to consider the claims of Jesus, to which before they had probably paid little, if any, heed.—*L. Abbott.* **Proving**—The word for “proving” in the original implies the combination and comparison of various passages one with another, and also, doubtless, with events in the life of Christ here on earth.—*Canon Cook.*

23. **After that** [Rev. Ver., *When*] **many days** [At this time occurred the visit to Arabia and the return to Damascus. See Introduction to the lesson.]—He could not in any case have stayed long in Damascus. His position there was for the present untenable. Alike the terror with which his arrival must have been expected by the brethren, and the expectation which it had aroused among the Jews, would make him the center of hatred and suspicion, of rumor and curiosity. He may even have been in danger of arrest by the very subordinates to whom his sudden change of purpose must have seemed to delegate his commission. But a stronger motive for retirement than all this would be the yearning for solitude; the intense desire, and even the overpowering necessity, to be for a time alone with God. He was a stricken deer, and was impelled as by a strong instinct to leave the

Revised Version.

23 And when many days were fulfilled, the Jews took counsel together to kill him: but their plot became known to Saul. And they watched

omitted without supposing any ignorance on the part of the historian. Besides, as the retirement of the apostle was most probably spent in prayer and meditation, and not in preaching the gospel, it evidently formed no part of his missionary labors, which Luke chiefly describes.—*P. J. Gloag.* **Took counsel** [Rev. Ver., *counsel together*.]—It was, throughout life, Paul's unhappy fate to kindle the most virulent animosities, because, though conciliatory and courteous by temperament, he yet carried into his arguments that intensity and forthrightness which awaken dormant opposition. A languid controversialist will always meet with a languid tolerance. But any controversialist whose honest belief in his own doctrines makes him terribly in earnest, may count on a life embittered by the anger of those on whom he has forced the disagreeable task of reconsidering their own assumptions.—*Farrar.* **To kill him**—They might at least plead the excuse—and how bitter was the remorse which such a plea would excite in Saul's own conscience—that they were only treating him in the way in which he himself had treated all who held the same opinions. Even-handed justice was thus commending to his own lips the ingre-



Ancient East Gate at Damascus.

herd.—*Farrar.* The journey to Arabia did not lie within the scope of Luke's history. The Acts is not a biography of Paul, and therefore many important events in his life may well be

omitted of that poisoned chalice of intolerance which he had forced on others.—*Farrar.*

24. **Their laying await was known** [Rev. Ver., *Their plot became known*.]—In what way

Authorized Version.

of Saul. And they watched the gates day and night to kill him.

25 Then the disciples took him by night, and ^e let him down by the wall in a basket.

26 And ^f when Saul was come to Je-

^e Josh. 2. 15; 1 Sam. 19. 12.—^f Chap. 22. 17; Gal. 1. 17.

cannot be ascertained. Probably through some one friendly to the Christians. **They watched the gates**—In this they were assisted by the Ethnarch, who supplied them with the means of doing it. This Ethnarch was either the Arab viceroy of Hareth, (Aretas, 2 Cor. 11. 32,) or the chief official of the Jews themselves, who well might possess this authority under a friendly prince.—*Farrar*. **To kill him**—They could let the quiet *Ananias* alone; they would not molest *the disciples*, (verse 25;) but this prince of apostates, this friend to the Gentiles, they will not tolerate, but will assassinate. Wherever Paul appears, though peace before reigned, a flame of wrath springs up. The reason is in one word—*Gentiles*.—*Whedon*.



Let down in a basket.

Already are the Lord's words fulfilled that Saul must suffer many things for his name's sake. Ver. 16.—*Gerok*.

25. **The disciples**—The reading, *His disciples*, [Rev. Ver.,] would make this refer to those

Revised Version.

the gates also day and night that 25 they might kill him: but his disciples took him by night, and let him down through the wall, lowering him in a basket.

26 And when he was come to Je-ru'-

Jews whom Saul converted at Damascus. **Took him**—The disciples "took Saul," an expression which would tend to show that he was exceptionally in need of help.—*Farrar*. **Let him down . . . in a basket**—Paul's more accurate description in 2 Cor. 11. 33 indicates the kind of basket, namely, one made of rope woven together. He also tells us that he was let down *through a window*. These lattice windows of the East are built like a modern bay-window, overlooking the street, and in some instances, where the house is built directly in the city wall, they extend beyond and over the wall, as in the annexed illustration, and look out upon the country beyond.—*L. Abbott*.

King Aretas had placed his men at the disposal of the enemies of Christ, but the King of heaven and earth gave his angels charge over his elect, that not a hair of his head should be touched.—*Leonhardt and Speilhagen*.

When Professor Hackett was in Damascus he saw a couple of men come to the top of the wall with a basket full of rubbish, which they emptied over the wall. A friend said to him: "Such a basket the people use here for almost every sort of thing. If they are digging a well, and wish to send a man down into it, they put him into such a basket; and that those who aided Paul's escape should have used a basket for the purpose was entirely natural, according to the present customs of the country. Judging from what is done now, it is the only sort of vehicle of which men would be apt to think under such circumstances.—*Illustrations of Scripture*.

26. **Saul was come to Jerusalem**—The motive of this visit, as he himself tells us, was to form Peter's acquaintance, or to inquire of Peter, whom in the time of persecution he had doubtless learned to regard as the chief of the apostles. He probably thought that the time was come for that concert with the former apostles which he had purposely abstained from seeking as a preliminary qualification for his own ministry. And even now he takes pains to have it understood that he accepted no formal confirmation of his call from the "apostolic college."—*W. Smith*.

Authorized Version.

ru'salem, he assayed to join himself to the disciples: but they were all afraid of him, and believed not that he was a disciple.

27 But ^s Bar'na-bas took him, and brought him to the apostles, and declared unto them how he had seen the Lord in the way, and that he had spoken to him, and how he had preached boldly at Da-mas'cus in the name of Je'sus.

^s Chap. 4. 36; 13. 2.

Assayed—Undertook. To join himself—To unite with the Christians in their assemblies, and to be recognized as one of "the way." **Were all afraid of him—**Saul, after his conversion, retired, and was unheard of for three years. This would occasion many doubts as to its reality. The impression which the event at first made would have been much diminished by time, and fear that Paul had



again fallen back would arise. And when we remember that he was not only a persecutor, but an inquisitor, we need not be surprised that the disciples at Jerusalem received him with some degree of suspicion.—*P. J. Gloag.* Add to this the fact that Damascus was in possession of a power unfriendly to Herod Agrippa, who was now ruling at Jerusalem, so that news would not pass as readily as usual between the two places. **Believed not—**The sudden appearance of Voltaire in a circle of Christians, claiming to be one of them, would have been something like this return of Saul to Jerusalem as a professed disciple.—*Hackett.*

27. **Barnabas took him—**He has already been mentioned in the Acts (4. 36, 37) as a Levite of Cyprus who, in spite of the prejudices of his rank, had been among the earliest to join the new community, and to sanction its happy communism by the sale of his own possessions. The dignity and sweetness of his character, no less than the sacrifices which he had made, gave him a deservedly high position among the persecuted brethren, and the power with which he preached the faith had won for him [in addition to his own name Joseph] the surname of Barnabas, "the son of exhortation." Tradition asserts that Barnabas had been a scholar of Gama-

Revised Version.

sa-lem, he assayed to join himself to the disciples: and they were all afraid of him, not believing that he

27 was a disciple. But Bar'na-bas took him, and brought him to the apostles, and declared unto them how he had seen the Lord in the way, and that he had spoken to him, and how at Da-mas'cus he had preached boldly in the name of Je'sus. And

liel, and the same feeling which led him to join a school, of which one peculiarity was its permission of Greek learning, might have led him yet earlier to take a few hours' sail from Cyprus to see what could be learned in the university of Tarsus. If so, he would naturally have come into contact with the family of Saul, and the friendship thus commenced would be continued at Jerusalem. It had been broken by the conversion of Barnabas, it was now renewed by the conversion of Saul.—*Farrar.* **Brought him to the apostles—**From the more definite account in Gal. 1. 18, 19, we find that the only leaders of the Church at Jerusalem whom Saul met on this visit were Peter, and James "the Lord's brother." It may be that the other apostles were absent from the city during the fortnight of Saul's stay, or that he did not attend any public meeting of the Church. **Declared unto them—**See Lesson III, and notes. **How he had seen the Lord—**This was enough to settle the whole question. He to whom the ascended and exalted Saviour had appeared and spoken was fit company for any man. **Had spoken to him—**That is, the Lord had spoken to Saul. **Had preached boldly—**The two reasons for receiving Saul, suggested by the narrative of Barnabas, were, first, his miraculous conversion, and, secondly, his ministerial fidelity; the one attested by the visible form and audible voice of his ascended Lord; the other by his public, plain, and fearless proclamation of that Lord as his Sovereign and Redeemer.—*J. A. Alexander.*

There is need of the wisdom of the serpent, to keep the mean between the extremes of suspicion on the one hand and credulity on the other; yet methinks it is safer to err on the charitable side, because it is an adjudged case, that it is better the tares should be found among the wheat than that the wheat should any of it be rooted up and thrown out of the field.—*M. Henry.*

Authorized Version.

28 And he was with them coming in and going out at Je-ru'-sa-lem.

29 And he spake ⁹ boldly in the name of the Lord Je'sus, and disputed against the ¹⁰ Gre'cians: ¹¹ but they went about to slay him.

30 Which when the brethren knew, they brought him down to Ces-a-re'a, and sent him forth to Tar'sus.

⁹ Eph. 6, 19.—¹⁰ Chap. 6, 1; 11, 20.—¹¹ 2 Cor. 11, 26.

Revised Version.

he was with them going in and going out at Je-ru'-sa-lem, preaching boldly in the name of the Lord: and he spake and disputed against the ¹ Gre'cian Jews; but they went about to kill him. And when the brethren knew it, they brought him down to Cæs-a-re'a, and sent him forth to Tar'sus.

¹ Hellenists.

28. He was with them.—With Peter and James, as representing the body of the apostles. **Coming in and going out.**—In free and frequent intercourse, walking together. **At Jerusalem.**—It speaks no little for the greatness and goodness of Peter—it is quite in accordance with that natural nobleness which we should expect to find in one whom Jesus himself had loved and blessed—that he was the earliest among the brethren to rise above the influence of suspicion.—*Farrar.* He spent only fifteen days at Jerusalem, as the guest of Peter, and it becomes a question of deep interest whether this intercourse of theirs took place before or after the time when Peter had opened the kingdom of heaven to the Gentiles by the conversion of Cornelius, (chap. 10,) and how far they aided in opening one another's eyes to the mystery of the conversion of the whole world.—*W. Smith.*

29. Disputed against the Grecians [Rev. Ver., *Grecian Jews.*—See on "the Grecians," or Hellenists, Notes, 1st Quar., Lesson X, ver. 1. He sought the synagogues of the Hellenists in which the voice of Stephen had first been heard, and disputed with an energy not inferior to his. It was incumbent on him, though it was a duty which required no little courage, that his voice should be uplifted in the name of the Lord Jesus in the places where it had been heard of old in blasphemy against him.—*Farrar.* But why did these men rather seek to kill Paul than Peter, James, or Barnabas? *Answer.* Because he was formerly one of their own company; of their own college; a persecutor like themselves, and a persecutor with themselves. This enraged them; they looked not upon him as an apostle, but as an apostate, one that had revolted from them, a renegade, and as such they meditate his destruction night and day.—*Burkitt.* There was another and a greater reason. The original apostles did not at this time, and perhaps never afterward even, present the salvation of the Gentiles and the passing away of all that was particularly Judais-

tic, with the emphasis and boldness of Paul. They assented to the truth of Gentile salvation, but did not urge it upon their hearers. But this which had been revealed to Paul at the beginning, and which he calls "my gospel," was ever made prominent in his teachings, and stirred up all the intolerance of his Jewish auditors. In a fortnight his presence at Jerusalem called forth an opposition which the twelve apostles had not excited in years of preaching Christ.

30. When the brethren knew.—This epithet, the "brethren," is here used historically to denote a Christian society. The Jews commonly used it at this time as expressing their close relationship to each other as Jews, (chap. 22. 5; 28. 17,) and when it was adopted by Christians it signified "communion of saints" and distinctive character.—*Jacobus.* The fact that the brethren at Jerusalem took these measures for the apostle's safety may be noted as a proof of their friendship. At Cæsarea he would probably, as afterward in chap. 21. 8, find Philip, and the friend and the accuser of the proto-martyr met face to face as brethren.—*H. Plumptre.* **They brought him down.**—He had scarcely been a fortnight in Jerusalem when the intensity of his prayers and emotions ended in a trance, (Acts 22. 17-21,) during which he again saw the divine figure and heard the divine voice which had arrested his mad progress toward the gates of Damascus. "Make instant haste and depart in speed from Jerusalem," said Jesus to him, "for they will not receive the testimony concerning me." But to Saul it seemed incredible that his testimony could be resisted. In contrasting his present earnestness with his former persecution, they could not but listen to such a teacher as himself. He longed also to undo, so far as in him lay, the misery and mischief of the past havoc he had wrought. But however deep may have been his yearnings, however ardent his hopes, the answer came, brief and peremptory, "Go!

Authorized Version.

31 Then ¹² had the churches rest throughout all Ju-de'a and Gal'i-lee and Sa-ma'ri-a, and were edified; and walking in the fear of the Lord, and in the comfort of the Holy Ghost, were multiplied.

¹² Psa. 119. 165.

for I will send thee forth afar to the Gentiles."—*Farrar*. To **Cæsarea**—See note on Cæsarea, Lesson II, ver. 40. To **Tarsus**—He went by some vessel across the north-eastern corner of the Mediteranean Sea. Tarsus was the principal

Revised Version.

31 So the church throughout all Jude'a and Gal'i-lee and Sa-ma'ri-a had peace, being ²edified; and walking ³in the fear of the Lord and ⁴in the comfort of the Holy Ghost, was multiplied.

² Gr. builded up.—³ Or, by.—⁴ Or, by.

uscripts have "the Church," in the singular; the difference is important only in its bearing on the question whether the Christian Churches were united, at this early period of their history, in one ecclesiastical organization, or were inde-



TARSUS.

city in the province of Cilicia. (See note, Lesson III, ver. 11.) In returning to his home at Tarsus, from which he had been absent at the least for four years, and possibly for a much longer period, it would be natural for him to resume his old employment as a tent-maker. Thence, as from a center, he did his work as an evangelist in the regions of Cilicia, (Gal. 1. 21,) where, in chap. 15. 41, we find Churches already organized which had not been founded in what we call the first mission journey of Paul and Barnabas, and must, therefore, have been planted by the former at an earlier period.—*E. H. Plumptre*.

31. Then had the churches [Rev. Ver., *So the Church throughout*, etc.].—The best man-

pendent of each other.—*L. Abbott*. Rest [Rev. Ver., *Peace*.]—The tranquility described may have been due, partly to the absence of any leading men among the opponents of the new society; partly, perhaps, to public excitement being diverted to the insane attempt of the Emperor Caligula to set up his statue in the Temple at Jerusalem, an attempt from which he was only dissuaded by the earnest entreaties of Herod Agrippa, whom he had raised to the dignity of King of Judea, but who happened at the time to be at Rome, and of Petronius, the President of Syria.—*E. H. Plumptre*. Galilee—The first mention of Christian Churches organized in Galilee. They may have been formed by Philip while he was residing at Cæsarea. And Sama-

ria—Jews and Samaritans meet together in peace, under the banner of the cross, an illustration alike of the pacificatory character of the Gospel, and of the divine purpose that it should become the religion of the world.—*Gerok.*
Were edified [Rev. Ver., *Being edified.*].—Made progress in Christian perfection, according to the usual meaning of the word in the New Testament; not “increased in numbers,” for that idea is expressed in the succeeding clause.—*P. J. Gloag.* **Fear . . . comfort**—A seemingly incongruous couple, fear and joy, fear and hope, or comfort. But indeed these two are so far from being inconsistent that they can hardly be separated. The more a man fears to offend God, and the greater his care is to please him, the greater his hope and comfort will be.—*Bishop Bull.* **Of the Holy Ghost**—What is meant here is that the words of counsel which came from the Holy Ghost speaking through the prophets of the Church were then, as always, far more signs and wonders, or human skill or speech, the chief agents in its expansion.—*E. H. Plumptre.* **Were multiplied**—Increased rapidly in the number of their members.

After a storm comes a calm. Though we are always to expect troublesome times, yet we may expect that they shall not last always. This was a breathing time allowed them to prepare them for the next encounter.—*M. Henry.*

Authorities to be Consulted.

Farrar's St. Paul, chaps. xi-xiv. Milman's History of Christianity, vol. i, pp. 368-376. Smith's New Testament History, chap. xiv. Conybeare and Howson's St. Paul, chap. iii. Schaff's History of Apostolic Church, 236-239. Guthrie's Sunday Magazine, ii, 65. Land and Book, i, 39. Freeman's Bible Manners and Customs, 871. Bonar's Bible Thoughts and Themes, iii, 116. Foster's Cyclopaedia of Illustrations, *3863, 3004.

Root Thoughts.

Constitutional characteristics, born in a man at the beginning, are likely to be new-born when Christ claims him. The persecutor prompt and brave becomes the prompt and brave preacher. He came to Damascus to confound the saints. Before he left it he con-

founded the Jews. When he returned to Jerusalem it was to “preach boldly in the name of the Lord.” The fort that served the foe, when captured served the friends.

But the Church was slow to believe the power of grace. See Ananias, who hesitated about going to Saul. See the Jerusalem disciples, who “were all afraid of him.” As then, so now. When we forget the almightiness of grace, we are surprised at the triumphs of that grace of which reports are brought to us. We say, “It is magnetism, or will power, or fanaticism, or fraud.”

The triumph of Christianity in the acquisition of Saul to the college of the apostles can scarcely be appreciated. It is an unanswerable argument in favor of historic Christianity. It was felt in Damascus by Jews who were “amazed and confounded,” and who, of course, “took counsel to kill him.” It was felt in Jerusalem by the Grecian Jews who, when they could not hush the voice that “preached boldly,” “went about to kill him.”

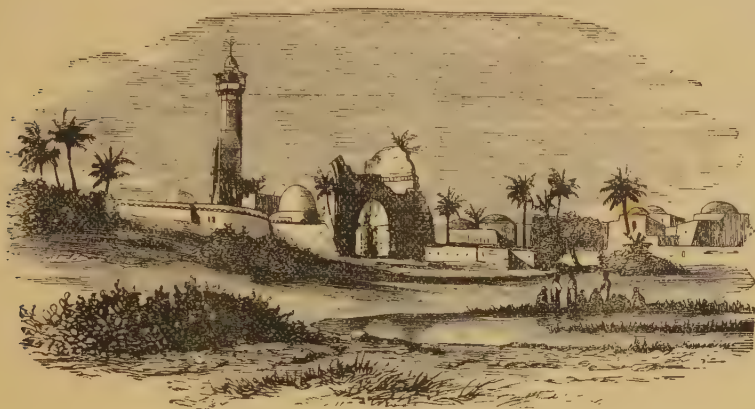
The highest tribute to his power is the record that, after Saul's manifestation as a convert to Christ in Damascus and Jerusalem, the Church “had peace, being edified,” etc.

Personal experience, personal testimony, personal character, the grand method of divine grace on the earth.

Practical Thoughts.

[THE TOKEN OF A TRUE CONVERSION.]

1. We see in Saul, the young convert, the token of *fellowship* with believers in Christ. Ver. 19.
2. We see the token of a prompt and decided *testimony* for Christ. Ver. 20.
3. We see the token of a radical and thorough *transformation* of character. Ver. 21.
4. We see the token of *steadfastness* and perseverance in Christ's service. Ver. 22.
5. We see the token of a *growth* in knowledge and in power. Ver. 22.
6. We see the token of an endurance of opposition and persecution. Vers. 23-25.
7. We see the token of a *fidelity* to Christ under unjust suspicion from Christ's people. Ver. 26.



Ludd, the ancient Lydda.

A. D. 39.]

LESSON V.

[April 29.

PETER WORKING MIRACLES.—Acts 9. 32-43.

GOLDEN TEXT.—Jesus Christ maketh thee whole.—Acts 9. 34.

TIME.—A. D. 39.—While Saul was at Tarsus, about the close of events in the last lesson.

PLACES.—Lydda and Joppa, on the maritime plain of Palestine.

INTRODUCTION.—While the storm is raging, the mariner's chief attention is given to the safety of the ship, and the post of the officer is on the deck; but when the wind has gone down, he can go below and make minute examination of the cargo and the hull, and do anything which may be needed in the hold. So while persecution was hot at Jerusalem, Peter's place was at Jerusalem; but when an interval of relief was enjoyed, he took the opportunity of making an apostolic visitation of the different Churches which had been founded in Palestine.—*W. M. Taylor.*

Authorized Version.

32 And it came to pass, as Pe'ter passed throughout 'all *quarters*, he came down also to the saints which dwelt at Lyd'da.

* Chap. 8. 14.

32. It came to pass—The opinion (Meyer, De Wette, Lange) is, upon the whole, probable that this visitation of Peter occurred during Paul's residence in Tarsus, after his departure from Jerusalem.—*P. J. Gloag.* As Peter passed through all quarters—[Rev. Ver., *went through all parts.*] Peter's journey was not an escape from persecution, but undertaken at a time of peace, and for the purpose of visiting the Churches.—*Alford.* Like the commander of an army, he went about inspecting the ranks, what part was compact, what in good order, what needed his presence.—*Chrysostom.* To the saints—The primary significance of this word is: individuals set apart to the service of

Revised Version.

32 And it came to pass, as Pe'ter went throughout all parts, he came down also to the saints which dwelt at

God; and as only those who had been ceremoniously purified were, under the Jewish law, thus set apart to God's service, the term came to have associated with it the idea of purity. Thus it means persons consecrated to and purified for the service of God. Now, this consecration was, on the one side of it, the voluntary dedication of the individuals themselves, but, on the other, the anointing of them by God with his Holy Spirit. Therefore, combining these two things, we may define saints as those who, purified by God's Spirit, have dedicated themselves to God's service; and as thus explained, the name is appropriate to all true believers who are seeking to walk in holiness and love.—*W. M.*

Authorized Version.

33 And there he found a certain man named E-ne'as, which had kept his bed eight years, and was sick of the palsy.

34 And Pe'ter said unto him, E-ne'as, ²Je'sus Christ maketh thee whole: arise, and make thy bed. And he arose immediately.

²Matt. 9, 6; John 5, 8; chap. 3, 6; 4, 10.

Revised Version.

33 Lyd'da. And there he found a certain man named E-ne'as, which had kept his bed eight years; for he was 34 palsied. And Pe'ter said unto him, E-ne'as, Je'sus Christ healeth thee: arise, and make thy bed. And 35 straightway he arose. And all that

Taylor. Lydda is situated in a beautiful undulating plain, which seems like a garden full of olive and fig-trees.—*Raumer.* This name, the Hebrew *Lod*, is still retained by the modern *Lidd* or *Ludd*, which probably occupies the same site. It stands in a part of the great maritime plain which anciently bore the name of Sharon. It is nine miles from Joppa, and is the first town on the northernmost of the two roads between that place and Jerusalem. The water-course outside the town is said still to bear the name of *Abi-Butrus*, (Peter,) in memory of the apostle.



Ruins of Church of St. George at Lydda.

It is, for a Mohammedan place, busy and prosperous.—*W. Smith.* The miracle wrought by Peter quickened the interest in Christianity here, a Church of some importance sprang up, and it became the seat of a bishopric frequently mentioned in ecclesiastical annals. It was probably the birthplace, and certainly the place of sepulcher, of the renowned St. George.—*L. Abbott.*

33. A certain man named Eneas [Rev.

Ver., *Eneas*.]—The probability is that he was a Christian; for it is said that Peter went down to visit the saints in Lydda; and in general, faith in Christ was a pre-requisite in those upon whom miracles of healing were wrought.—*P. J. Gloag.* **Kept his bed eight years**—In the care with which Luke records the circumstances of the case, the eight years of bedridden paralysis, we note a trace of professional exactness, as in chaps. 3. 7; 9. 18; 28. 8. The word “bed,” used commonly of the couches of the lower class suggests the thought that poverty also was added to his sufferings.—*E. H. Plumptre.*

34. **Peter said unto him**—Observe here the difference between the manner in which this miracle was wrought by Peter, and the manner in which Jesus Christ performed his miracles. The different characters of the servant and the Son are most apparent.—*P. J. Gloag.* **Jesus Christ maketh thee whole**—*Jesus the Messiah healeth thee.* Observe that Peter makes this healing itself a proclamation that Jesus is the Messiah, and heals in the Messiah's name, not in his own. Comparing the New Testament with the Old Testament, observe that it is Jesus the Messiah “who forgiveth all thine iniquities, who healeth all thy diseases.” Psalm 103. 3.—*L. Abbott.* **Make thy bed**—Literally, *spread for thyself*; the word bed is not in the original. This, which others had before done for him, he was now to do for himself, as an evidence of the thoroughness of his cure: arising showed strength in his

lower limbs; spreading the bed showed command of his arms and hands.—*L. Abbott.* **He arose immediately** [Rev. Ver., *straightway he arose*.]—He appears as a characterless man, quite in contrast with the noble maiden whose story next follows.—*Whedon.*

Luther, with his heroic and mighty faith, speaks authoritatively to the faint-hearted and dying Melancthon: “Thou must live! Thou

Authorized Version.

35 And all that dwelt in Lyd'da and
³Sa'ron saw him, and ⁴turned to the
 Lord.

² 1 Chron. 5. 16.—⁴ Chap. 11. 21.

shalt not die!" It was at Weimar, in 1541; after very fervent prayer, Luther seized the hand of his friend, who was already unconscious, and said: *Bono animo esto, Philippe; non morieris!* "Be of good cheer, Philip! thou shalt not die!"—*Schaeffer.*

Revised Version.

dwelt at Lyd'da and in Shar'on saw
 him, and they turned to the Lord.

of Lydda, but of the plain generally, heard and believed.—*L. Abbott.* **Saw him**—Not saw the cure, but saw him after he was cured.—*L. Abbott.* **Turned to the Lord**—It is not meant literally all the inhabitants were spiritually converted to



Jaffa, the ancient Joppa.

35. All that dwelt at Lydda and Saron
 [Rev. Ver., *At Lydda and in Sharon.*]—Saron
 or Sharon was the district in which Lydda
 stood. It was a plain extending about thirty
 miles along the coast from Joppa to Cæsarea.
 It has been conjectured that there was a village
 of that name, but no trace of it has been found.
 Luke's meaning is that the inhabitants, not only

Christ, but that there was a general and popular
 recognition of Jesus founded on this miracle.—
L. Abbott. This is, no doubt, a reason for this
 one case being singled out from many of the
 same kind, not because it was intrinsically more
 important, but because it was connected with
 this progress of the truth, and with other great
 events about to be recorded.—*J. A. Alexander.*

Authorized Version.

36 Now there was at Joppa a certain disciple named Tab'i-tha, which by interpretation is called Dorcas: this woman was full of good works and alms-deeds which she did.

37 And it came to pass in those days, that she was sick, and died: whom when they had washed, they laid her in an upper chamber.

38 And forasmuch as Lyd'ba was nigh to Joppa, and the disciples had heard that Peter was there, they sent

Revised Version.

36 Now there was at Joppa a certain disciple named Tab'i-tha, which by interpretation is called Dorcas: this woman was full of good works and

37 almsdeeds which she did. And it came to pass in those days, that she fell sick, and died; and when they had washed her, they laid her in an upper chamber. And as Lyd'ba was

38 nigh unto Joppa, the disciples, hearing that Peter was there, sent two

a On Dan, or Dan.—b Prov. 31, 31; 1 Tim. 2, 10; 5, 14; 1 Tim. 5, 5; Jas. 1, 27.—c Chap. 1, 13.

36. At Joppa—Joppa was an ancient Philistine city on the borders of Dan. Its name signifies *to be beautiful, to shine*, and was probably given because of the effect of the sunshine reflected from its houses which rose, as now, tier upon tier, upon the hill sloping upward from the sea. It had a celebrated but not a very safe harbor, and has been since the days of Solomon the port of Jerusalem. Here were brought the fir trees and the cedar trees in the times of Hiram and Zerubbabel. Here Jonah took ship to flee from the Lord. It was a prominent fortification in the war of the Maccabees and in the later conflicts of the Crusades, when, for a half a century, it was alternately built and destroyed. Judas Maccabeus, Antiochus, Ptolemy, Caesar, Vespasian, Umar, Saladin, Richard, Godfrey, Napoleon, have all in turn laid siege to it, and it has at least once been entirely effaced. It is now called Jaffa, and has a population of fifteen thousand, a large proportion of whom are Christians.—*L. Abbott*. Named Tabitha . . . Dorcas—Here dwelt a disciple whose name "Tabitha" in Aramaic, in Greek "Dorcas," that is, *gazelle*, generally associated in the East with the perfection of female beauty, has become the type of the greater loveliness of that charity with which she clothed the poor by the labor of her own hands.—*W. Smith*. The use of the Greek equivalent for her Syriac name may be accounted for by her residence at Joppa, a seaport much frequented by, and no doubt partially inhabited by, foreigners speaking chiefly the Greek language.—*Wilkinson*. Full of good works—A good work, in general, is a help or contribution, to the making up of which these four things are necessary: (1) The principle must be good from which it proceeds; it must be from "an honest and upright heart," from "a pure conscience, from faith unfeigned." (2) The matter must be good. (3) It must be well done.

36. At Joppa—Joppa was an ancient Philistine city on the borders of Dan. Its name signifies *to be beautiful, to shine*, and was probably given because of the effect of the sunshine reflected from its houses which rose, as now, tier upon tier, upon the hill sloping upward from the sea.

The phrase indicates the well-doing, and the name indicates the merciful service that attended it. She was a "disciple," and the word, "Sheweth" full of good works, denotes the fruit-bearing branches. God hath visited these two, they shared power and wisdom for their labor. These two are beautiful in unity; but either wanting its mate "is dead, being alone."—*W. Smith*.

The giving of alms does not ingovernish; it empties the hand but fills the heart.—*Charles*.

37. She was sick and died—Strength of grace and dearness of association, many times of these things, cannot be over-estimated.—*Charles*.

Whom, when they had washed—Rev. 7, 13. When they had washed him. The custom of washing the dead was common, not only among the Jews, but also among the Greeks and Romans. Thus, Macmonides says: "It is the custom in Israel about the dead and their burial, that when any is dead, they shut his eyes and wash his body."—*P. J. Wang*. Laid her in an upper chamber—The houses of the poorer classes in the East have but one story. In the best houses, the best rooms are often on the second floor. Here may be intended such a second-story room, but more probably a large, airy hall, not unfrequently constructed upon the roof of a house and forming a sort of third story. Here the Hebrews received company, gave feasts, and sometimes held religious services.—*L. Abbott*.

It was only after her death that it became known what a treasure she should have been to the church. The door of the rising sun opened, and the light of the world in which it lay shined was taken.—*Bosser*.

38. Lyd'ba was nigh to Joppa—Lyd'ba was nigh to Joppa. They sent unto him—They desired his sympathy and ministry, and

Authorized Version.

unto him two men, desiring him that he would not delay to come to them.

39 Then Pe'ter arose and went with them. When he was come, they brought him into the upper chamber: and all the widows stood by him weeping, and showing the coats and garments which Dor'cas made while she was with them.

40 But Pe'ter put them all forth, and kneeled down, and prayed; and turning him to the body said, Tabitha, arise. And she opened her eyes: and when she saw Pe'ter, she sat up.

41 And he gave her his hand, and

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men unto him, intreating him, De-
39 lay not to come on unto us. And Pe'ter arose and went with them. And when he was come, they brought him into the upper chamber: and all the widows stood by him weeping, and shewing the coats and garments which Dor'cas made, while she was with them. But Pe'ter put them all forth, and kneeled down, and prayed; and turning to the body, he said, Tabitha, arise. And she opened her eyes; and when she saw Pe'ter, 41 she sat up. And he gave her his

6 Or, be grieved.—Matt. 9. 25.—1 Kings 17. 19-23; 2 Kings 4. 32-38; chap. 7. 60.—Mark 5. 41; John 11. 43.

possibly having heard of the miracle at Lydda, had some vague hope for help.—*L. Abbott.* Desiring him, etc. [Rev. Ver., *Intreating him, Delay not to come on unto us.*]—*That thou wilt not delay to come to us.* This is the best reading, and is adopted by Tischendorf and Alford. The variation is important only as the form is a slight indication that Luke was perhaps an eye and ear witness of what followed.—*L. Abbott.* It was, of course, necessary that he should come at once, as interment would have come, as a matter of course, on the following day.—*E. H. Plumptre.*

It was too late to send for a physician, but not too late to send for Peter. A physician after death is an absurdity, but not an apostle after death.—*M. Henry.*

39. Peter went with them—Whether expecting to console the mourners or to recall the dead, we are not informed, and probably Peter did not know. All the widows stood by—Apparently there were no professional mourners and none of that ostentation of grief which Christ rebukes in Mark 5. 39. That was a Jewish household; this is a Christian company.—*L. Abbott.* Showing the coats and garments—The former is the tunic, a loose shirt extending to the knees, the latter a large, loose cloak worn by day and used as a covering by night.—*L. Abbott.* The coats and garments may some of them have been upon the persons showing these, others laid up for bestowal.—*Whedon.* Which Dorcas made—The Gazette seems to have been unmarried, for no husband weeps for her or is named; she seems to have been not poor, as she was not compelled to be industrious for her own sake. But if wealthy she was neither too indolent to work nor too proud to work for the poor.—*Whedon.*

Perishable monuments, you may think. Think of an inscription to commemorate a great life sewed with thread in garments for the poor! written, not in brass and stone, but on the smooth sea-sand, ready to be blotted out by to-morrow's tide! Nay, but this woman's eulogy has, in point of fact, been more securely preserved and more widely published than the victories of Rome or the art of Greece. All generations read her praises, and call her blessed. She has been greatly honored. In one point she has been made like the Lord: she has left us an example that we should follow her steps. Many are treading in her track to-day, and the world is greener for us because of the footsteps that she left imprinted on its sand.—*W. Arnot.*

40. Peter put them all forth—In imitation of his Lord's example, (Mark 5. 40.) Perhaps as in 2 Kings 4. 33, for privacy in prayer.—*L. Abbott.* And prayed—In one respect this miracle is peculiar, in that Peter performed it without any reference to Christ, and as if in his own name; but if his prayer were reported we should probably find this otherwise singular omission supplied. He received such assurance of answer to his prayer as justified his authoritative tone.—*L. Abbott.* Tabitha, arise—Peter's use of the Syriac name has been regarded as an indication that he was using that language.—*Canon Cook.* She opened her eyes—When she opened her eyes, which had been so long closed in death, they rested upon Peter, whom she no doubt saw to be a stranger and alone in the apartment. Roused by this unexpected sight, she finally sat up, thereby evincing the completeness of the miracle, and her own entire resurrection.—*J. A. Alexander.*

41. He gave her his hand—Observe how he, as it were, awakes her out of sleep; first she opened her eyes; then, upon seeing Peter, she sat up; then, from his hands she received

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lifted her up; and when he had called the saints and widows, he presented her alive.

42 And it was known throughout all Jop'pa; ¹⁰and many believed in the Lord.

43 And it came to pass, that he tarried many days in ¹¹Jop'pa with one Si'mon ¹²a tanner.

¹⁰ John 11. 43; 12. 11.—¹¹ Josh. 19. 46; 2 Chron. 2. 16; Ezra 3. 7; Jonah 1. 3.—¹² Chap. 19. 6.

strength.—*Chrysostom.* Called the saints and widows—*The saints* are her companions in Christian faith and works; the *widows*, those to whom she had ministered.—*L. Abbott.* Presented her alive—The whole account suggests the idea of deliberation and composure, as opposed to that of hurry and excitement on the part of Peter, or of possible delusion on the part of the spectators.—*J. A. Alexander.*

Dorcas died regretted; she was worth regretting, she was worth being restored; she had not lived in vain, because she had not lived for herself. The end of life is not a thought, but an action—action for others. But you, why should you be regretted? Have you discovered spiritual truth like Paul? Have you been brave and true in defending it, like Peter? or cheered desolate hearts by sympathy, like Ananias? or visited the widows and the fatherless in their affliction, like Dorcas? If you have, your life will leave a trace behind which will not soon be effaced from earth.—*F. W. Robertson.*

42. Known throughout—The writer does not say of Joppa, as of Lydda, that *all turned to the Lord*, for Joppa was a large city, but that *all heard of it and many believed.*—*Whedon.* Believe in the Lord—Evidently, then, the miracle was performed in the name of the Lord, and was so understood throughout the community.—*L. Abbott.*

43. Tarried many days—Perhaps for a year; for we find that Peter abode in Joppa until he went to Cæsarea. The city was large, and the inhabitants showed a susceptibility toward the gospel.—*P. J. Gloag.* With one Simon a tanner—His house was by the seaside, (chap. 10. 6,) and one is now pointed out which Stanley thinks may occupy the original site. "It is close to the sea-shore; the waves beat against the low wall. In the court-yard is a spring of fresh water, such as must always have been needed for the purposes of tanning. This occupation was in ill-repute among ancient nations, especially the Jews. The latter considered entering into it after marriage ground for divorce,"

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hand, and raised her up; and calling the saints and widows, he presented

42 her alive. And it became known throughout all Jop'pa: and many

43 believed on the Lord. And it came to pass, that he abode many days in Jop'pa with one Si'mon a tanner.

and forbade any tanner to become high-priest or king. Peter's selection of this abode indicates both the slight esteem in which the Christians were held by the Jews at Lydda, and the diminished hold which Judaism had upon the mind of Peter.—*Dean Stanley.*

The house of Simon the tanner may have been disregarded by men, but, according to chap. 10. 6, it was well known in heaven, and in the presence of the angels of God, and was beheld by them with interest.—*Rieger.*

If I might guess, then guess I would:

Amid the gathering folk,
This gentle Dorcas one day stood,
And heard what Jesus spoke.

She saw the woven, seamless coat,
How envious for his sake:
"O happy hands," she said, "that wrought
That honored thing to make!"

Her eyes with longing tears grew dim,
She never can come nigh

To work one service poor for him
For whom she glad would die!

But hark! He speaks a mighty word:
She hearkens now indeed!

"When did we see thee naked, Lord,
And clothed thee in thy need?"

"The King shall answer, Inasmuch
As to my brothers ye
Did it even to the least of such,
Ye did it unto me."

Home, home she went, and plied the loom,
And Jesus' poor arrayed.

She died: they wept about the room,
And showed the coats she made.

—*George Macdonald.*

Authorities to be Consulted.

Smith's New Testament History, p. 426.
Peter the Apostle, (Rev. W. M. Taylor,) 268.
F. W. Robertson's Sermons. Guthrie's Sunday Magazine, i, 616. Freeman's Bible Manners and Customs, Nos. 338, 821, 828. Arnot's Church in the House, 231. Foster's Cyclopedia of Illustrations, *3339, 3593.

Root Thoughts.

From Saul back to Peter. The power which he received at Pentecost goes with him. He travels widely, preaches plainly, works marvelously.

The immediate need determined the direction of his power. He raised Æneas, the palsied, and he did it in the name of Jesus Christ. He raised Dorcas, the dead, and he did it by prayer and faith. All this was done publicly. It was done especially in new regions where the foundations were to be laid by miracles in the external realm. They were not miracles wrought to excite wonder; but miracles of mercy, of healing, of power divine. They were in the line of the whole gospel movement.

The great truths signified in the spiritual kingdom by the miracles wrought in the realm of the visible were more important than the miracles themselves. The power to put force into palsied souls, which power the gospel everywhere and always exerts, is a greater thing than the power to restore strength to impotent limbs.

The restoration of a dead Dorcas in the Church of believers might be considered as much a reflection upon the believers as it was a tribute to the loveliness and earnestness of Dorcas' life. Every saint may and should pack into his life "good works and almsdeeds," should provide "coats and garments" for the needy. It is well

that there are a few Tabithas. It is a tribute to their value that the divine power will bring such back, on occasion, from the dark regions of death. But why not turn the whole Church into a company of Tabithas?

There is resurrection power in philanthropy. It cannot die. Deposited in the grave it is seed in soil from which flowers and harvests keep coming up. Love is sure of a resurrection unto eternal life.

Practical Thoughts.

[THE GOOD WORKS OF A DISCIPLE.]

1. Good works are an essential, yet not the only essential, of discipleship. Ver. 36.
2. True faith in Christ and love to him are the motives from which good works spring. Ver. 36.
3. There are good works for all disciples, for women as well as for men. Ver. 36.
4. The most useful and valuable among disciples are sometimes called away from the earthly Church to the heavenly. Ver. 37.
5. The good works of the living disciple are not forgotten after her death. Ver. 38.
6. Those who live for others the most faithfully are mourned by others most fervently. Ver. 39.
7. The results of good works and the name of the worker may linger long on the earth.

A. D. 40.]

LESSON VI.

[May 6.]

PETER PREACHING TO THE GENTILES.—Acts 10. 30-44.

GOLDEN TEXT.—On the Gentiles also was poured out the gift of the Holy Ghost.—Acts 10. 45.

TIME.—A. D. 40.

PLACE.—Cæsarea Stratonis, on the coast of Palestine.

CONNECTING LINKS.—(1) The angel appearing to Cornelius, Acts 10. 1-6. (2) The vision of Peter, Acts 10. 7-16. (3) Peter's journey to Cæsarea, Acts 10. 17-29.

INTRODUCTION.—Luke now unfolds a new and positive advance in the secession of Christianity from Judaism. The martyrdom of Stephen had sealed the certainty of such a separation, and now the head of the movement must be the leading apostle Peter, under angelic guidance, at the Gentile capital, Cæsarea. This was a vital question, not for Judaism only, but for even us in this nineteenth century, and in this land of America: *Must we be circumcised Jews in order to be Christians?* So believed the first Jerusalem Church: so, at first, Peter held; and from this yoke it was Paul, the apostle of us Gentiles, pre-eminently, who was our emancipator.—Whedon. *Peter's vision.*—It was the apostle's custom to ascend at noon to the house-top, which looked over the western waters, for solitary prayer; unconsciously blending his devotions with those which a Roman soldier at Cæsarea was continually offering, that new light might be added to what he had learned as a "proselyte of the gate." This soldier was Cornelius, a centurion of the Italian cohort, "a just man, and one that feared God, with all his house, and of good repute among all the Jewish nation, who gave much alms to the people, and prayed to God alway." To this man's devotion and faithfulness to the light he had was vouchsafed a vision of an angel, bidding him to send to Joppa for Simon Peter, who should tell him what he ought to do. It was

no phantasm of a nocturnal dream, but an open vision, manifest to his waking sense, at three o'clock in the afternoon, as he was praying in his house at the hour of the evening sacrifice. His messengers were already approaching Joppa on the following day, when Peter also, in his mid-day retirement upon the house-top, was visited in a trance by a vision which taught him, through emblems specially adapted to his prejudices as a Jew, the hardest lesson for a Jew to learn, "that he should not call any man common or unclean," and which was interpreted by the words, thrice repeated from heaven, "What *God hath cleansed*, that call not thou common."—*W. Smith*. The symbolical import of this vision we can easily conjecture. The vessel denotes the creation, especially mankind; the letting down of it from heaven, the descent of all creatures from the same divine origin; the four corners are the four quarters of the globe; the clean and unclean beasts represent the Jews and Gentiles; and the command to eat contains the divine declaration that the new creation in Christ has henceforth annulled the Mosiac laws respecting food, (Lev. 10. 10,) as well as the distinction between clean and unclean nations; and that even the heathen, therefore, were to be received into the Christian Church without the intervention of Judaism; as the cloth, with all the animals, was taken up again to heaven.—*Schaff*.

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30 And Cor-ne'li-us said, Four days ago I was fasting until this hour; and at the ninth hour I prayed in my house, and, behold, ¹a man stood before ²me in bright clothing,

31 And said, Cor-ne'li-us, ³thy prayer

¹ Chap. 1. 10.—² Luke 24. 4.—³ Dan. 10. 12.

30. Cornelius said—He was a Roman centurion, at Cæsarea, in command of a company of soldiers. Cornelius was one of those Gentiles, not uncommon in the apostolic age, who had become dissatisfied with the religious worship



A Roman Soldier in Armor.

of his ancestors, and was attached to the purer religion of the Jews. He had ceased to be an idolator, and had become a worshiper of the true God. He had so far adopted the principles of Judaism that he kept its hours of worship,

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30 And Cor-ne'li-us said, Four days ago, until this hour, I was keeping the ninth hour of prayer in my house; and behold, a man stood before me
31 in bright apparel, and saith, Cor-ne'li-us, thy prayer is heard, and

attached himself in some degree to the Jews, and perhaps attended their synagogue, or adopted their ceremonial observances.—*P. J. Gloag*. I was fasting [This clause is omitted in the Rev. Ver., which reads, *Four days ago I was keeping the ninth hour of prayer in my house.*]—He does not mean that he has now been fasting four days, but that he fasted to about this hour of day on the day of the angel's appearance, namely, the fourth day before his present speaking.—*Whedon*. I prayed [Rev. Ver., *Was keeping the ninth hour of prayer*, that is, at 3 P. M.]—Cornelius doth not talk of his fasting, praying, and almsgiving by way of ostentation, to boast of himself, but only to give satisfaction to St. Peter, that he had certain advice from heaven for what he did in sending for him.—*Burkitt*. A man stood before me [Rev. Ver., *Before me.*]—He is here described, according to his appearance, in verse 3, and in chap. 11. 13, according to the reality; here as a man, there as an angel. Comp. Matt. 28. 5 with Mark 16. 5.—*L. Abbott*. In bright clothing [Apparel, Rev. Ver.]—The same adjective is employed by John to describe the raiment of the angels, (Rev. 15. 6,) and of the bride of the Lamb. Rev. 19. 8.—*E. H. Plumptre*. The angels bear with them, when they appear, the signs and livery of their purity and sincerity.—*Quesnel*.

31. Thy prayer is heard—As the vision that follows may rightly be regarded as an answer to the prayers thus offered, it is natural to infer that Cornelius was seeking for guidance as to the new faith which Philip had brought to

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is heard, 'and thine alms are had in remembrance in the sight of God.

32 Send therefore to Jop'pa, and call hither Si'mon, whose surname is Pe'ter; he is lodged in the house of *one* Si'mon a tanner by the seaside: who, when he cometh, shall speak unto thee.

33 Immediately therefore I sent to thee; and thou hast well done that thou art come. Now therefore are we all here present before God, to hear all things that are commanded thee of God.

34 Then Pe'ter opened *his* mouth, and

⁴ Prov. 14. 31; Matt. 6. 4; 10. 42; 25. 40; Heb. 6. 10.

Cæsarea, and of which he could scarcely fail to have heard.—*E. H. Plumptre*. **Alms are had in remembrance**—Alms may assume two forms. They may be complete or incomplete. Alms complete—works which may be enumerated, estimated; deeds done, and put in as so much purchase. Ten times ten thousand such will never purchase heaven. But the way in which a holy man does his alms is quite different from this. In their very performance, done as pledges of something more; done with a sense of incompleteness; longing to be more nearly perfect, they become so many aspirations rising up to God—sacrifices of thanksgiving, ever ascending like clouds of incense that rise and rise in increasing volume, still dissatisfied, and still aspiring. Alms in this way become prayers, the highest prayers, and all existence melts and resolves itself into a prayer.—*Rudelbach*.

The prayer of faith has wings, with which it soars up to God, and the alms of love ascend to heaven as a sacrifice that is well pleasing to God.—*Leonhardi and Spielhagen*.

32. To Joppa—See Lesson VI, verse 43, note. Joppa is about thirty-five miles south of Cæsarea. **Call hither Simon**—The angel had no commission to give instruction. He only directed Cornelius to the earthen vessel to which the treasure of heavenly truth had been committed.



Our Lord did not, in the first instance, teach Saul, but referred him to Ananias.—*Canon Cook*. **Who when he cometh** [The last clause of this verse is omitted in Rev. Ver.] **Will speak** (or *talk*) **to thee**—Not in general merely, but with special reference to the questions which

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thine alms are had in remembrance in the sight of God. Send therefore to Jop'pa, and call unto thee Si'mon, who is surnamed Pe'ter; he lodgeth in the house of Si'mon a tanner, by the sea side. Forthwith therefore I sent to thee; and thou hast well done that thou art come. Now therefore we are all here present in the sight of God, to hear all things that have been commanded thee of the Lord. 34 And Pe'ter opened his mouth, and said,

then occupied his mind, as to the worship of the true God and the method of salvation.—*J. A. Alexander*.

33. **Immediately therefore** [Rev. Ver., *forthwith*.]—In all spiritual matters we should be prompt. Cornelius lost no time in sending messengers for Peter. He was in earnest, and the sooner he could find rest for his soul, the better.—*W. M. Taylor*. **Thou hast well done**—The peculiar turn of the phrase, in social usage, made it the expression, not of mere approval, but of heartfelt gratitude.—*E. H. Plumptre*. **We are all here present before God**—We could wish that these words were inscribed on every church door, or on every pulpit, so that men might properly consider the purpose for which they should enter the church.—*Bogatsky*. **To hear all things**—The words imply that the circle that had gathered round Cornelius were sharers in his solicitude, ready to comply with whatever might come to them as the command of God, and yet anxiously hoping that it might not impose upon them a burden too heavy to be borne.—*E. H. Plumptre*. He says this, not doubting that God, who had directed him to Peter, had also directed Peter what to speak to him.—*Alford*. **Commanded thee of God**—Observe that Cornelius is attentive, not to Peter the man, but to Peter as the commissioned messenger of God. The presence of God and the word of God are pre-eminent, the presence and word of Peter are subordinate.—*L. Abbott*.

34. **Opening his mouth**—Suggests the idea of a regular discourse, as distinguished from a simple conversation.—*J. A. Alexander*. **I perceive**—God had accepted the centurion. It remained for his servants to accept him also.—*E. H. Plumptre*. **God is no respecter**—What had always been true; though through Jewish prejudice he had never before realized it. He had believed that no one who never heard of Judaism

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said, ⁵Of a truth I perceive that God is no respecter of persons:

35 But ⁶in every nation he that feareth him, and worketh righteousness, is accepted with him.

36 The word which *God* sent unto the children of Is'ra-el, preaching ⁷peace by Je'sus Christ: (⁸he is Lord of all:)

⁵ Deut. 14. 17; 2 Chron. 10. 7; Job 34. 19; Rom. 2. 11; Gal. 2. 6; Eph. 6. 9; Col. 3. 11, 25; 1 Pet. 1. 17. — ⁶ Chap. 15. 9; Rom. 2. 13; 3. 22; 10. 12; 1 Cor. 12. 13; Gal. 3. 28; Eph. 2. 13; 3. 6. — ⁷ Isa. 57. 18; Eph. 2. 17; Col. 1. 20. — ⁸ Dan. 7. 14; Matt. 28. 18; chap. 2. 22; 4. 27; Rom. 10. 12; 1 Cor. 15. 27; Eph. 1. 20; 1 Pet. 3. 22; Rev. 17. 14; 19. 16.

could be saved; just as many believe now that no one who never heard of Christianity can be saved.—*Whedon*.

And said—This address of Peter, when he opens his mouth, rolls onward like a mighty stream which, as it were, buries the remembrance of Cornelius and his virtues in the holy stillness of an unfathomable sea. The names of Cornelius and every other individual—the name, the glory and the honor of every man, are extinguished; one solitary name shines forth in this sermon—it is the name of the Lord Jesus Christ. In place of the works of Cornelius, or of all other men, the works and deeds of God in Christ alone are mentioned. All human righteousness disappears as in a deep sea, but that sea is the infinite love of God.—*Harless*.

No respecter of persons.—(1) A terrible saying for all the ungodly among the great of the earth; (2) A soothing saying for all the devout among the lowly.—*Starke*.

35. In every nation—Among Gentiles as well as Jews. **Feareth him . . . worketh righteousness**—Two fundamental traits of character secure his approval, namely, (1) a genuine reverence for and allegiance to the divine being; (2) a sincere endeavor to show forth that allegiance and reverence by practical right doing in daily life.—*L. Abbott*. In heathen lands this will appear in rectitude of life. In Christian lands it will appear in faith in Christ and obedience to his holy requirements. The unbelieving moralist who quotes this text to prove his acceptability with God shows by the very fact of his unbelief that he does not truly *fear God*.—*Whedon*. **Is accepted**—He speaks *popularly*, and certainly not without reference to the character *he had heard of* Cornelius, which consisted of these very two parts: that he *feared God*, and *abounded in good works*. The deeper truth, that the preparation of the heart itself in such men *comes from God's preventing grace*, is not in question here, nor touched upon.—*Alford*. This is no reason why the Gospel should not be

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Of a truth I perceive that God is no respecter of persons: but in every nation he that feareth him, and worketh righteousness, is acceptable to him. ¹The word which he sent unto the children of Is'ra-el, preaching ²good tidings of peace by Je'sus Christ (he is Lord of all)—that say-

¹ Many ancient authorities read *He sent the word unto*.—² Or, *the gospel*.

preached to the heathen, both as a means for producing such reverence and righteousness of life, and also as an answer to the craving of soul of those in whom this spirit of piety is created.—*L. Abbott*.

A glance at certain great first principles, particularly the three that follow, would induce the hope that many more than we commonly suspect, are thus harvested for the kingdom: *First*, That God loves all men impartially, and is no respecter of persons; having the same desire to be loved by all, and be known as their friend. *Second*, That he is never afar off from any, but is close at hand, putting them always on seeking after him, in a desire to have them find him. *Third*, That the Spirit of God is present, going through all minds, all over the world, moving them inwardly in a way to kindle their yearnings and draw their inclinations toward the inborn grace that will be in turn his finding of them.—*H. Bushnell*.

36. The word which God [Rev. Ver., *he*] sent—As to the word or doctrine of salvation (chap. 13. 26,) which God has sent in the first instance to his ancient people, its joyful news of peace and reconciliation cannot be designed for them alone, since Jesus Christ, through whom it is proclaimed, is Lord of all men, not of the Jews only.—*J. A. Alexander*. **Preaching peace** [Rev. Ver., *good tidings of peace*] by **Je'sus Christ**—Some (De Wette, Heinrichs, Alford,) understand this of peace between Jews and Gentiles, as in Eph. 2. 17; but this is here an unnatural interpretation, there being no allusion to such a peace in the context. Rather by peace is here meant salvation in general (Meyer) the glad tidings of the Gospel.—*P. J. Gloag*. **Lord of all**—By right as the Creator; by merit, as the Redeemer; by gift, as the Only Begotten of the Father.—*Bernard*. The parenthesis is significant as guarding against the thought which Cornelius might have entertained, that the Jesus of whom he heard as the Christ was only a prophet and a teacher.—*E. H. Plumptre*.

Authorized Version.

37 That word, *I say*, ye know, which was published throughout all Ju-de'a, and began from Gal'i-lee, after the baptism which John preached;

38 How ⁹ God anointed Je'sus of Naz'a-reth with the Holy Ghost and with power: who went about doing good, and healing all that were oppressed of the devil; for ¹⁰ God was with him.

39 And we are witnesses of all things which he did both in the land of the Jews, and in Je-ru'sa-lem; whom they slew and hanged on a tree:

⁹ Luke 4. 18; Heb. 1. 9.—¹⁰ John 1; 3. 2; Col. 2. 9.

37. That word . . . ye know [Rev. Ver., *That saying ye yourselves know.*].—The declaration of Peter is that his auditors knew that Jesus Christ ministered throughout Galilee, working miracles and preaching unto the children of Israel. It is now made known both to him and them that this Jesus is Lord of all, Gentile as well as Jew.—*L. Abbott.* Published throughout all Judea—Peter recites the facts of his history backward. Rightly, for he thus begins with the latest and best-known facts, and runs his narrative into the earlier and less-known facts. And this having brought him to the beginning, he, in the next verses, runs down from the beginning to the present.—*Whedon.* Began from Galilee [Rev. Ver., *Beginning from Galilee.*].—Jesus Christ commenced his ministry, and his fame had its beginning, in Galilee.—*P. J. Gloag.*

38. God anointed—*Christ, Messiah*, both signify the *anointed*. How God Christed, Messiahed Jesus, the Nazarene.—*Whedon.* The mysterious relation between the Son and the Father is not excluded by this general expression, but is not prominently brought forward because Peter accommodates himself to his hearers, and leads them gradually to higher views of the person and doctrine of Christ.—*P. J. Gloag.* With power—Power is not merely the power to perform miracles, but the whole moral and spiritual might manifested by Christ's life of doing good and healing.—*L. Abbott.* The extraordinary powers which our Lord possessed are here referred to as notorious to all residing in the country, whether Jews or Gentiles. Another fact, assumed as equally familiar, is the use which he made of these divine endowments. He did not use them for his own advantage, or in vengeance on his enemies.—

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ing ye yourselves know, which was published throughout all Ju-dæ'a, beginning from Gal'i-lee, after the baptism which John preached; *even* Je'sus of Naz'a-reth, how that God anointed him with the Holy Ghost and with power: who went about doing good, and healing all that were oppressed of the devil; for God was with him. And we are witnesses of all things which he did both in the country of the Jews, and in Je-ru'sa-lem; whom also they slew, hanging him on a tree. Him God

J. A. Alexander. Went about doing good.—A suggestive characterization of what Christ's life was, and what the Christian's life should be.—*L. Abbott.* Oppressed of the devil.—The words seem to us to refer specially to the works of healing performed on demoniacs, but were probably uttered with a wider range of meaning, all disease being thought of as the work directly or indirectly of the great enemy. So Satan had bound the woman with a spirit of infirmity. Luke 13. 11. So Paul's "thorn in the flesh" was "a messenger of Satan to buffet him," 2 Cor. 12. 7.—*E. H. Plumptre.*

Who went about doing good.—(1) From this description it is evident that he did good personally. (2) His mode of doing good sets forth his incessant activity: he "went about" on his errand of mercy. (3) Does not the text also imply that he went out of his way to do good? He was never deterred by danger or difficulty. In this way we may see (1) His perseverance, and (2) his unity. Application: "He hath left us an example that we should follow in his steps."—*C. H. Spurgeon.*

39. We are witnesses—Everywhere the apostles fulfill their special mission, which was that of bearing testimony to the life, work, death, and resurrection of Jesus. Whom they slew—It was through the shame of the cross of Christ that Satan was overcome, and through this the Gentiles were to be converted. Hence, Peter does not hesitate to acknowledge before those Gentiles that Jesus had been hanged on a cross.—*Starke.* Hanged on a tree—As in chap. 2. 23, Peter represents the crucifixion as virtually the act of the rulers and people of Jerusalem, and not of the Roman governor.—*E. H. Plumptre.* It is characteristic of Peter in all his addresses, and in his first epistle, to speak of "the tree," rather than "the cross."

Authorized Version.

40 Him God raised up the third day, and showed him openly;

41 Not ¹¹to all the people, but unto witnesses chosen before of God, *even* to us, who ¹²did eat and drink with him after he rose from the dead.

42 And ¹³he commanded us to preach unto the people, and to testify ¹⁴that it is he which was ordained of God *to be* the Judge of ¹⁵quick and dead.

43 To ¹⁶him give all the prophets witness, that through his name whoso-

¹¹ John 14. 17. ¹² John 21. 13. ¹³ Matt. 28. 19. ¹⁴ John 5. 29. ¹⁵ Rom. 14. 9; 2 Cor. 5. 10; 2 Tim. 4. 1; 1 Pet. 4. 5. ¹⁶ Isa. 53. 11; Jer. 31. 34; Dan. 9. 24; Mic. 7. 18; Zech. 13. 1; Mal. 4. 2.

40, 41. **Showed him openly** [Rev. Ver., *Gave him to be manifest.*] **Not to all the people**—This is an announcement which no impostor would ever have made.—*Paley.* **But unto witnesses**—Why did Christ only show himself to witnesses chosen before of God? Why not publicly to *all* the people? Consider (1) What would have been the probable effect of a public exhibition. (2) The means which his divine wisdom actually adopted with a view of making his resurrection subservient to the propagation of his Gospel. (3) In selecting but a few witnesses, our Lord was but acting according to the general course of his providence. (4) The witnesses were few, because they were on the side of truth. Christ's cause was the cause of light and religion, therefore his advocates and ministers were necessarily few.—*J. H. Newman.* **Did eat and drink with him**—The three recorded instances of this are found in Luke 24. 30, 42; John 21. 13. This was, of course, the crucial test which showed that the form on which the disciples had looked was no phantom of the imagination.—*E. H. Plumptre.*

42. **He commanded** [Rev. Ver., *Charged.*]—This word suggests the solemn and weighty import and the certain truth of the word of the apostles—sworn, as it were, to speak the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth.—*L. Abbott.* **To preach . . . and to testify**—Observe the double office of the minister: he is a herald to announce news, and a witness to confirm it by his own testimony and that (see next verse) of the word of God. **Unto the people**—Peter is beginning to understand the full meaning of the Lord's command, and his use of the term "the people," without adding the qualifying phrase of *Israel*, (chap. 4. 10; 13. 17, 24,) indicates the change at work, under the influence of the Spirit of God, in his mind.

Revised Version.

raised up the third day, and gave
41 him to be made manifest, not to all the people, but unto witnesses that were chosen before of God, *even* to us, who did eat and drink with him
42 after he rose from the dead. And he charged us to preach unto the people, and to testify that this is he which is ordained of God *to be* the Judge of
43 quick and dead. To him bear all the prophets witness, that through

This change is consummated when he sees the Holy Ghost evidently bestowed upon the Gentiles.—*L. Abbott.* **Ordained of God**—The words *to be* are added needlessly by the translators. Christ *is now* the judge; his life and character are the standard by which every man is to judge himself; he shows what is the ideal of humanity, and so, how far we have fallen from it. **Judge of quick**—*Living.* Those who are *living* when Christ comes, and those who are then *dead*; the former to put on the resurrection nature by a *change* without death; the latter to be raised from the dead.—*Whedon.*

43. **To him give** [Rev. Ver., *bear*] **all the prophets witness**—It is to be observed that Peter first mentions the person, miracles, and resurrection of Christ as things that were known to Cornelius and his company, and then contents himself with telling them in general that the Jewish prophets bore witness to him, and the reason of this is because he was at present addressing a company of Gentiles to whom miracles were the most obvious proof of a divine commission, but who were comparatively ignorant of the Jewish prophecies.—*P. J. Gloag.* Not necessary to be taken literally. But it certainly implies the unquestionable truth that Jesus Christ was the central theme of the body of Old Testament prophecy, both spoken and symbolical.—*L. Abbott.* **That through his name**—Here is embodied (1) the only means of salvation, namely, the name of Jesus which signifies saviour from sin; (2) the universality of the offer of salvation, *whosoever* believeth; (3) the condition of salvation, *believeth in him*, not believing any doctrine *about* him, nor merely believing *what he says*, but believing, trusting, relying *upon him* as the one supreme object of confidence, (see Matt. 18. 6, note;) (4) the nature of salvation, *the remission of sins*, not merely the

Authorized Version.

ever believeth in him shall receive remission of sins.

44 While Peter yet spake these words, the Holy Ghost fell on all them which heard the word.

Revised Version.

his name every one that believeth on him shall receive remission of sins.

44 While Peter yet spake these words, the Holy Ghost fell on all them which heard the word.

forgiveness, that is, the remission of the future penalty, but the remission of the sin itself, the cleansing from all unrighteousness.—*L. Abbott.* **Shall receive remission**—We can without difficulty represent to ourselves the impression which these words must have made on the anxious listeners. This was the answer to their doubts and perplexities. Not by submitting themselves to the bondage of the law, not by circumcision and all that it implied, but by the simple act of faith in Christ, and in the power of his name, that is, of all the attributes and energies of which the name was the symbol, they, Gentiles as they were, might receive that remission of sins which conscience, now roused to its full activity, taught them was the indispensable condition of acceptance and of peace. The intensity of that emotion, the satisfaction of all their previous yearnings, placed them subjectively in a spiritual condition which prepared the way for the wonder which the next verse narrates.—*E. H. Plumptre.*

44. While Peter yet spake—Peter had spoken up to this point, and was probably proceeding (compare his own account of his speech, *as I began to speak*, chap. 11. 15) to include his present hearers and all nations in the number to whom this blessing was laid open, or perhaps *beyond this point* his own mind may as yet have been not sufficiently enlightened to set forth the full liberty of the Gospel of Christ, when the fire of the Lord fell, approving the sacrifice of the Gentiles, (see Rom. 15. 16,) conferring on them the *substance before the symbol*, the baptism of the Holy Ghost before the baptism with water; and teaching us that as the Holy Spirit dispensed once and for all with the necessity of circumcision in the flesh, so can he also, when it pleases him, with the necessity of water baptism; and warning the Christian Church not to put baptism itself in the place which circumcision once held.—*Alford.* **The Holy Ghost fell**—The words imply a sudden thrill of spiritual joy and elevation which showed itself, as it had done on the day of Pentecost, in a burst of unpremeditated praise. Now, as then, the “tongues” manifested themselves, not as instruments of teaching, but in “magnifying God.”—*E. H. Plumptre.* **On all them which heard**—This miraculous endowment of Cor-

nelius and his friends with the Holy Ghost served three purposes: It certified the truth of Peter's words; it proved to Peter and to those who were with him the genuineness of the faith of the Gentile converts; and as it was bestowed through no apostolic intervention, but directly and immediately by the Lord, it indicated his will that they who had received it should be then and there admitted to the membership of the Church.—*W. M. Taylor.*

Authorities to be Consulted.

Schaff's History of the Apostolic Church, 217. Milman's History of Christianity, i, 377. Smith's New Testament History, 427. Conybeare and Howson's St. Paul, chap. iv. Farrar's St. Paul, chap. xv. F. W. Robertson's Sermons. Pulpit Analyst, v, 522. Bushnell's Sermons on Living Subjects, 352. Preacher, (London,) ii, 310. Edmondson's Short Sermons, 578. Guthrie's Sunday Magazine, 1869, 609. Bonar's Bible Thoughts and Themes, iii, 130. Foster's Cyclopedia of Illustrations [Figures marked with a star refer to poetical volumes]—4447, *2005, 10090, 3963, 8942, 4286, *2572, 287, 2545, 3664, 10059, 4173, 615, 1603, 2606, 9107, 698, 6158, 7229, 10888, 9558.

Root Thoughts.

Not Saul only, but Peter also, shall go into the regions beyond. The Galilean fisherman shall be the bearer of good news of grace to the Gentile world. From the sunken basin in which he fished by Gennesaret, he shall go up and on and out, until, by the “Great Sea,” and under the boundless sky, he shall see visions from heaven, and bear messages full of blessing to the representatives of the non-Jewish part of his race.

A vision gives vision. Peter is developed into new power by a trance. It comes, through natural conditions, to a devout soul at the hour of his prayer, directed by divine wisdom and filled with the great mystery of the new dispensation. There is a world of suggestion in that descending “sheet” to the hungry Jew, and in the conversation between the Jew and the God of both Jew and Gentile. It was a broad outlook for a narrow man. It descended “from

heaven," and it was accompanied by a "voice," the voice of God, and only because it came with such authority could it influence Peter—the little, the limited, Galilean Jew-fisherman.

But Peter was a good pupil and God a wise teacher. The way was prepared at Cæsarea. The way was prepared at Joppa. The God who sees both Cæsarea and Joppa, both Cornelius and Peter, both Gentile and Jew, thus produced a fragment of history, not only interesting as an illustration of Cornelius' piety, Peter's teachableness and God's wisdom, but especially as an announcement of certain eternal principles of human brotherhood and divine righteousness on which the whole Gospel scheme is founded, and for the furtherance of which it was given to the world.

The chords struck by the sea at Joppa and Cæsarea break into an anthem that earth and heaven hear.

Practical Thoughts.

[THE TRUE SEEKER AFTER SALVATION.]

1. The true seekers after salvation may be found in all lands and among all classes of people. Ver. 30.
2. The true seeker after salvation is earnest and constant in prayer for light. Ver. 30.
3. The prayers of the true seeker are heard and answered before the throne. Ver. 31.
4. The true seeker, though answered by an angel, is led to Church through a human instrumentality. Ver. 32.
5. The true seeker is prompt to use every opportunity and ready to hear the word. Ver. 33.
6. The true seeker fears God and works righteousness. Ver. 35.
7. The true seeker finds testimony to Christ in the Scriptures. Vers. 37-43.
8. The true seeker receives the Spirit's testimony of acceptance with God. Ver. 44.



Antakia—Antioch in Syria.

A. D. 41.]

LESSON VII.

[May 13.]

THE SPREAD OF THE GOSPEL.—Acts 11. 19-30.

GOLDEN TEXT.—And the hand of the Lord was with them; and a great number believed and turned unto the Lord.—Acts 11. 21.

TIME.—From A. D. 41 to 43. beginning soon after the last lesson.

PLACE.—Antioch in Syria.

INTRODUCTION.—An important link in the chain of events was formed when at Antioch a church was

founded, composed of both Jewish and Gentile elements. Up to this time only a few individuals beyond the pale of Judaism had been received into the Christian brotherhood. But now a church appears, in which the Gentile element is predominant—a church which gives a name to the entire body of disciples, and which is destined soon to become the starting point for missionary work, and the true mother-church of the Christian world. Jerusalem, deserted by the apostles, loses its pre-eminence, and Antioch becomes the leader of the growing, world-wide Christianity.

Authorized Version.

19 Now ¹ they which were scattered abroad upon the persecution that arose about Stephen traveled as far as Phenice, and Cyprus, and Anti-och, preaching the word to none but unto the Jews only.

¹ Chap. 8. 1.

Revised Version.

19 They therefore that were scattered abroad upon the tribulation that arose about Stephen travelled as far as Phœni'cia, and Cyprus, and Anti-och, speaking the word to none
20 save only to Jews. But there were

19. They that were scattered—Those that fled from persecution did not flee from their work; though for the time they declined suffering, yet they did not decline service; nay, they threw themselves into a larger field of opportunity than before. Those that persecuted the preachers of the Gospel hoped thereby to prevent their carrying it to the Gentile world; but it proved that they did but hasten it the sooner.

—*M. Henry.* The persecution [Rev. Ver., tribulation] . . . about Stephen—The Saul who laid in ruins the Church of Jerusalem was unconsciously deepening the foundations of circumstance on which hereafter—the same and not the same—he should rear the superstructure of the Church of God. Saul, the persecutor, was doing, by opposite means, the same work as Paul the apostle.—*Farrar.* As far as Phenice [Rev. Ver., Phœnicia]—A small but important commercial country, from 1 to 20 miles wide, and from 150 to 180 miles long, lying between the crest of Lebanon and the sea. Itself a fruitful country, its fleets carried not only its own products, but those of Assyria, Babylon, and Egypt, to the Greeks and other inhabitants of Europe and of Northern and Western Africa. It was peopled by the descendants of Ham, and its principal cities, which were ordinarily independent, uniting only under the most powerful in time of danger, were Sidon, Tyre, Berytus, Byblus, Tripolis, and Aradus.—*L. Abbott.* And Cyprus—A large island in the Mediterranean, about sixty miles from the coast of Palestine. It is fertile, though not extensively cultivated, and produces cotton, wine, and fruits. It has also some mineral products. After belonging to Egypt, Persia, and Greece, it became a Roman possession A. D. 58, and was added to Cilicia.—*L. Abbott.* Antioch—Antioch, founded in B. C. 300 by Seleucus Nicator, and named



in honor of his father, Antiochus, was the capital of the Greek kings of Syria, and afterward the residence of the Roman governors of the province which bore the same name. It was situated where the chain of Lebanon, running northward, and the chain of Taurus, running eastward, are brought to an abrupt meeting. Here the Orontes breaks through the mountains; and Antioch was placed at a bend of the river, partly on an island, partly on the level which forms the left bank, and partly on the steep and craggy ascent of Mount Silpius, which rose abruptly on the south.—*W. Smith.* Its geographical position, its political and commercial importance, and the presence of a large and powerful Jewish element in its population, were the more obvious characteristics which made it fit for such a center of Gentile Christianity.—*W. Smith.* Preaching the word—The missionaries are not named. They kept back their own names, and put forward that of their Lord. They have left no record of themselves on earth; but they have as their record on high a great multitude brought by their ministry to the Saviour.—*W. Arnold.* Jews only—They preached to the Jews only, because they were not yet persuaded of the calling of the Gentiles; God suffering them to be enlightened by degrees.—*M. Pool.*

Hence we learn how much was accomplished in the first Christian propaganda by the easy, natural, and spontaneous influence of laymen. The first successes of Christianity in foreign parts were on this wise. Individual believers, dispersed abroad in the providence of God, imparted to others those glad tidings with which their own souls were gladdened.—*W. Adams.*

Authorized Version.

20 And some of them were men of Cyprus and Cy-re'ne, which, when they were come to An'ti-och, spake ² unto the Gre'ci-ans, preaching ³ the Lord Je'sus.

21 And ⁴ the hand of the Lord was with them: and a great number believed, and turned ⁵ unto the Lord.

22 Then tidings of these things came unto the ears of the church which was in Je-ru'sa-lem: and they sent forth ⁶ Bar-na-bas, that he should go as far as An'ti-och.

23 Who, when he came, and had seen the grace of God, was glad, and ⁷ ex-

Revised Version.

some of them, men of Cyprus and Cy-re'ne, who, when they were come to An'ti-och, spake unto the ¹ Greeks also, preaching the Lord Je'sus.

21 And the hand of the Lord was with them: and a great number that

22 believed turned unto the Lord. And the report concerning them came to the ears of the church which was in Je-ru'sa-lem: and they sent forth Bar'-

23 na-bas as far as An'ti-och: who, when he was come, and had seen the grace of God, was glad; and he

² Chap. 6. 1. — ³ Eph. 1. 8. — ⁴ Luke 1. 66. — ⁵ Chap. 9. 25. —
⁶ Chap. 9. 27. — ⁷ Chap. 13. 43; 14. 22.

Many ancient authorities read *Grecian Jews*.

20. And some of them [Rev. Ver., *But there were some of them men of*, etc.]—These were, from the nature of the case, Hellenistic, or Greek-speaking Jews. Who they were we can only conjecture. Possibly Lucius of Cyrene, who appears in the list of prophets in chap. 8. 1; possibly Simon of Cyrene, of whom there is reason to think that he was a disciple of Christ. See Matt. 27. 32; Mark 15. 21. The founders of the Church of Antioch, like those of the Church of Rome, must remain unknown.—*E. H. Plumptre*. **Cyrene**—See First Quarter, Lesson II, note on verse 10. **Spake unto the Grecians** [Rev. Ver., *Unto the Greeks also*.]—The fact, so much obscured by the wrong reading followed by our English version, is nothing less than the beginning, on a large scale, of the *conversion of the Gentiles*. It is one of the great *moments* in the ascensive work begun by Stephen, advanced by Philip, authorized by Peter, and finally culminating in the life, mission, and epistles of Paul.—*Farrar*.

21. The hand of the Lord—By the *hand arm*, and *finger* of God, in the Scripture, different displays or exertions of his power are intended. Here it means that the energy of God accompanied them, and applied their preaching to the souls of all attentive hearers.—*A. Clarke*. **Turned to the Lord**—That is, turned from their heathen faith and practices, and accepted the new faith and Christ as their Lord. This, no less than the miracles, afforded a sign of divine approval; for though success is not always a proof of God's approbation, spiritual success in spiritual work always is.—*L. Abbott*.

The root of the tree lies out of sight. The manner in which it lives and operates is in a great measure concealed. But the fruit can be both seen and tasted. By the fruits we know the

tree. To believe is the secret act of the soul; to turn to the Lord is the visible course of a disciple's life.—*W. Arnot*.

22. Tidings of these things came—Perhaps some message was sent in haste to the Apostles of the Church. The Jewish Christians in Antioch might be perplexed how to deal with their new Gentile converts.—*Conybeare and Howson*. **They sent forth**—The Christians at Jerusalem criticised Peter for eating with uncircumcised heathen (ver. 8;) and subsequently Christians from Jerusalem insisted on circumcision as a condition of admission to the Church (chap. 15. 1;) we may assume, therefore, that these Jewish Christians would think the reception of Gentiles as Christian converts an offense. The object of this mission, then, was probably to inquire into the supposed irregularity, and to correct it.—*L. Abbott*. **Barnabas** (See Lesson IV, verse 27. Note on Barnabas.)—The fact that he was himself of the same country would also qualify him for co-operating with the men of Cyprus, who were carrying on that work in Antioch.—*E. H. Plumptre*. **As far as Antioch**—About three hundred miles north of Jerusalem.

It is probable that Barnabas had a particular genius for work of this kind, was active and conversable, and loved to be in motion, delighted in doing good abroad as much as others in doing good at home, was as much of Zebulun's spirit, who rejoiced in *his going out*, as others are of Issachar's, who rejoiced in *his tent*; and his talent lying this way, he was fittest to be employed in this work. God gives various gifts for various services.—*M. Henry*.

23. Seen the grace of God—The force of the original can hardly be given in an English version. It is not merely *the grace of God*, but *the grace which [evidently] was that of God*,

Authorized Version.

horted them all, that with purpose of heart they would cleave unto ^athe Lord.

24 For he was a good man, and full of the Holy Ghost and of faith: ^aand much people was added unto the Lord.

25 Then departed Bar'na-bas to Tar'sus, ¹⁰for to seek Saul:

^a Deut. 10. 20; 1 Cor. 15. 58; Gal. 2. 20; Col. 2. 6.—^a Chap. 5. 14.—¹⁰ Chap. 9. 30.

which he recognized as that of God.—*Alford*. **Was glad**—It certainly is implied that the effect produced on Barnabas was *something different from what might have been expected*: that to sympathize with the work was *not the intent* of his mission, but a result brought about in the heart of a good man, full of the Holy Ghost and of faith, by witnessing the effects of divine grace.—*Alford*. **With purpose of heart**—The Greek word rendered *purpose* means literally *setting forth*, and is used to designate the show-bread, (Matt. 12. 4; Mark 2. 26; Luke 6. 4,) which was set before and consecrated to the Lord. Here the *purpose of heart* is a heart similarly set before God by being wholly consecrated to his service.—*L. Abbott*. **Cleave unto the Lord**—By *cleaving unto Jesus* is meant that we hold fast to his religion, abhorring the thought of apostasy; that we adhere to him as the revealer of truth, avoiding every heresy and error; that we rest upon him by faith as our atoning priest; that we kneel to him as our King; that we cling to his example; that we keep near him as the source of all spiritual sanctifying influence; and that we abide in him as our everlasting portion and ultimate good.—*J. W. Alexander*.

I have seen a heavy piece of solid iron hanging on another, not welded, not linked, not glued to the spot; and yet it cleaved with such tenacity as to bear not only its own weight, but mine, too, if I chose to seize it and hang upon it. A wire charged with an electric current is in contact with its mass, and hence its adhesion. Cut that wire through, or remove by a hair's breadth, and the piece of iron drops dead to the ground like any other unsupported weight. A stream of life from the Lord, in contact with a human spirit, keeps that spirit cleaving to the Lord so firmly that no power on earth or hell can wrench the two asunder.—*W. Arnot*.

24. **For he was a good man**—This explains the reason, not why he was sent on this mission, but why, in its execution, he recognized the work of God in calling and converting the uncircumcised. He was kind in disposition; the inspiration of his service was not ecclesiastical

Revised Version.

exhorted them all, ^athat with purpose of heart they would cleave unto

24 the Lord: for he was a good man, and full of the Holy Ghost and of faith; and much people was added unto the Lord. And he went forth to Tar'sus 26 to seek for Saul: and when he had

^a Some ancient authorities read that they would cleave unto the purpose of their heart in the Lord.

tical pride or ambition, but love and good will, full of and ready to be guided by the Spirit of God; and of faith or spiritual insight, the power which sees the things that are unseen, (Heb. 11. 1,) and hence was able to appreciate the spiritual.—*L. Abbott*. **Gentile Luke** is accounting for Barnabas' deep and ready sympathy with this *Gentile movement*, by Barnabas' own Christian liberality and goodness.—*Whedon*. **Full of the Holy Ghost**—See notes, 1st. Quar., Lesson X, verses 3, 5. **Much people was added**—As the result of the sanction given by Barnabas, as the representative of the mother Church, to the good work among the Gentiles, and the results of his own labors in addition to those of the former workers.

25. **Then departed Barnabas to Tarsus**—From Antioch to Tarsus is a short journey down the river to Seleucia, and across the arm of the Mediterranean Sea. On Tarsus, see note, Lesson IV, ver. 30. **To seek Saul**—The act is every way significant. It indicates the assurance that Saul would approve of the work which had been going on at Antioch, and the confident belief that he was the right person to direct and organize it. It probably implies also some intercourse with the apostle, by letter or message, since his departure from Jerusalem.—*E. H. Plumptre*. In the absence of any direct record we can only infer that Saul had remained at Tarsus, carrying on his occupation as a tent-maker (chap. 18. 3) and preaching the Gospel there and in the neighboring cities of Cilicia.—*E. H. Plumptre*.

So when a miner in the gold-fields has fallen upon a piece so large that he is unable single-handed to remove it, he leaves it where it lies; leaves the precious lump buried in the ground; leaves it, though his heart is in it, because his heart is in it, and goes away in search of a friend who may help him to bear the treasure home.—*W. Arnot*.

It is a very good work to fetch a candle from under a bushel, and to set it in a candlestick.—*M. Henry*.

Authorized Version.

26 And when he had found him, he brought him unto An'ti-och. And it came to pass, that a whole year they assembled themselves ^a with the church, and taught much people. And the disciples were called Christians first in An'ti-och.

27 And in these days ¹¹ came prophets from Je-ru'sa-lem unto An'ti-och.

^a Or, in the church.—¹¹ Chap. 2, 17; 13, 1; 1 Cor. 12, 28; Eph. 4, 11.

26. He brought him to Antioch—Thus, twice over, did Barnabas save Saul for the work of Christianity. To his self-effacing nobleness is due the honor of recognizing, before they had yet been revealed to others the fiery vigor, the indomitable energy, the splendid courage, the illuminated and illuminating intellect, which were destined to spend themselves in the high endeavor to ennoble and evangelize the world.—*Farrar*. Saul, heretofore in the shade, is now, though for a while subordinate to Barnabas, forevermore drawn forth, like a Damascus blade from its scabbard.—*Whedon*. **A whole year**—For a whole year—and it may well have been the happiest year in the life of Saul—he worked here with his beloved companion. The calm and conciliatory tact of Barnabas tempered and was inspired by the fervor of Saul.—*Farrar*. **Assembled themselves** [Rev. Ver., *Were gathered together*.]—John Malela, a historian of Antioch, (says Mr. Lewin,) in the sixth century, tells, on the authority of Dominius, an antiquary of a much earlier age, the spot where Paul and Barnabas held their public meetings. It was in Singon-street, near the Pantheon. So public a matter may perhaps have been transmitted by the Christian Church.—*Whedon*. **Taught much people**—As new converts, in vast numbers, came in from the ranks of the Gentiles, the Church began to lose its ancient appearance of a Jewish sect, and to stand out in relief as a great self-existent community, in the face both of Jews and Gentiles.—*Conybeare and Howson*. **Were called Christians**—This appellation was not assumed by the Christians themselves. They rather called themselves “disciples,” “believers,” (in reference to their relation to the Lord,) “saints,” (with respect to their character and the great problem of their lives,) “brethren,” (referring to their mutual fellowship.) Still less was it given them by the Jews, who would have been far from applying to the hated heretics the hallowed name of Christ, Messiah, and who contemptuously called

Revised Version.

found him, he brought him unto An'ti-och. And it came to pass, that even for a whole year they were gathered together ^a with the church, and taught much people; and that the disciples were called Christians first in An'ti-och.

27 Now in these days there came down prophets from Je-ru'sa-lem un-

^a Gr. in.

them rather “Galileans,” “Nazarenes.” The name came from the heathen, who applied it to the followers of Jesus Christ, either in mockery, or from a mere misunderstanding, taking the term, Christ, for a proper name, instead of an official title.—*Schaff*. In the New Testament, as is well known, it occurs but thrice; once in the historical notice of its origin, and only in two other places as a name used by enemies. It was employed by Agrippa the Second in his half-sneering, half-complimentary interpellation to Paul, (Acts 26. 28;) and it is used by Peter as the name of a charge under which the brethren were likely to be persecuted and impeached. 1 Peter 4. 16.—*Farrar*.

The word *Christian* indicates a decisive epoch, and was the coinage rather of a society than of any single man. More, perhaps, than any word which was ever invented it marks, if I may use the expression, the watershed of all human history. It signalizes the emergence of a true faith among the Gentiles, and the separation of that faith from the tenets of the Jews. All former ages, nations, and religions contribute to it. The conception which lies at the base of it is Semitic, and sums up centuries of expectation and of prophecy in the historic person of One who was anointed to be for all mankind a Prophet, Priest, and King. But this Hebrew conception is translated by a Greek word, showing that the great religious thoughts of which hitherto the Jewish race had been the appointed guardians, were henceforth to be the common glory of mankind, and were, therefore, to be expressed in a language which enshrined the world's most perfect literature, and which had been imposed on all civilized countries by the nation which had played by far the most splendid part in the secular annals of the past. And this Greek rendering of a Hebrew idea was stamped with a Roman form by receiving a Latin termination, as though to foreshadow that the new name should be co-extensive with the vast dominion which swayed the present destinies of the world.—*Farrar*.

27. Came [Rev. Ver., *Came down*] **prophets**—In both the Old Testament and the New

Authorized Version.

28 And there stood up one of them named Ag'a-bus,¹² and signified by the Spirit that there should be great dearth throughout all the world; which came to pass in the days of Clau'di-us Ce'sar.

29 Then the disciples, every man according to his ability, determined to send¹³ relief unto the brethren which dwelt in Ju-de'a:

30 Which also they did, and sent it to the¹⁴ elders by the hands of Bar'na-bas and Saul.

¹² Chap. 21. 10.—¹³ Rom. 15. 26; 1 Cor. 16. 1; 2 Cor. 9. 1; Gal. 2. 10; 1 Pet. 4. 11.—¹⁴ 1 Pet. 5. 1.

Testament the prominent idea in prophecy and prophesying is not prediction, but inspiration; not telling before what is to happen, but delivering messages of warning, instruction, comfort, helpfulness, such as are commissioned by or given under the inspiration of the divine Spirit.—*L. Abbott*. These inspired teachers are frequently mentioned in the New Testament. They appear to have exercised their gifts in supernatural teaching, having a divine insight into the truths of the gospel, piercing with the eye of the soul into spiritual realities.—*P. J. Gloag*. **From Jerusalem**—The primal mother was still eminent in piety, doctrine, and spiritual gifts.—*Whedon*.

28. **Agabus**—Agabus at this time must have been comparatively a young man, as twenty years afterward he is mentioned as coming from Jerusalem on purpose to warn Paul not to approach that city. Acts 21. 10.—*P. J. Gloag*. **Signified by the Spirit**—Spoke under the direction and by the power of the Holy Ghost, foretelling the future. **There should be great dearth**—*Famine*, as in Rev. Ver. **Over all the world**—Literally, *the inhabited earth*, used, as in Luke 2. 1; 4. 5, and elsewhere in the New Testament, for the Roman Empire.—*E. H. Plumptre*. **In the days of Claudius Cæsar**—The reign of Caligula lasted from A. D. 37-41, that of Claudius from A. D. 41-54. The whole reign of the latter emperor was memorable for frequent famines. Josephus (*Ant.*, xx, 5) speaks of one as specially affecting Judea and Syria, under the procuratorship of Cuspius Fadus A. D. 45. The population of Jerusalem were reduced to great distress, and were chiefly relieved by the bounty of Helena, Queen of Adiabene, who sent in large supplies of corn, figs, and other articles of food.—*E. H. Plumptre*.

29. **The disciples, every man according**—We learn one of the rules divinely prescribed

Revised Version.

28 to An'ti-och. And there stood up one of them named Ag'a-bus, and signified by the Spirit that there should be a great famine over all⁴ the world: which came to pass in the 29 days of Clau'di-us. And the disciples, every man according to his ability, determined to send⁵ relief unto the brethren that dwelt in Ju-30 dæ'a: which also they did, sending it to the elders by the hand of Bar'na-bas and Saul.

⁴ Gr. *the inhabited earth*.—⁵ Gr. *for ministry*.

for the management of charities: Among the disciples (1) every man gave; and (2) every man gave as the result of a deliberate determination a spontaneous act of his own will; and (3) every man gave according to his ability.—*W. Arnot*. **Determined to send relief**—The Gentile disciples felt that they were bound by the closest link to those Jewish brethren whom though they had never seen, they loved.—*Conybeare and Howson*. **Unto the brethren** . . . in Judea—At Jerusalem there were men of wealth and rank who became Christians; but first such, in the first fervor of their love, impoverished themselves in devoting their whole wealth to charity; next, they were broken up and dispersed by persecution; and last, they were afflicted with a famine, by which Josephus tells us that many Jews died of starvation.—*Whedon*.

30. **Sent it to the elders**—The elders of the Church are here named for the first time, and appear henceforth as a permanent element of its organization, which in this respect followed the arrangements of the synagogue.—*E. H. Plumptre*. The very incidental way in which they are introduced indicates, (1) That Luke did not consider the history of Church organization intrinsically important; and, (2) That the form of Church polity arose spontaneously, created and shaped by immediate convenience and expediency.—*Whedon*. **By the hands of Barnabas and Saul**—Paul, in his epistles, does not mention all his visits to Jerusalem, but only those which were of importance for the object he had in view—the establishment of his apostolic office. There may have been other visits not mentioned during the fourteen years which intervened between the two visits of which he writes. Now in this visit it does not appear that he met with the apostles, but only with the elders.—*P. J. Gloag*.

Authorities to be Consulted.

Smith's New Testament History, p. 430. Milman's History of Christianity, i, 377; Schaff's Apostolic Church, 223. Farrar's St. Paul, chap. xvi. Conybeare and Howson's St. Paul, chap. iv. Arnot's Church in the House. Edmondson's Short Sermons, 227. Jay's Mornings with Jesus, 237, 394. Guthrie's Sunday Magazine, 1870, p. 29; 1865, 653, 781. E. H. Plumptre's Biblical Studies, p. 323. Prophets of the New Testament. Foster's Cyclopedia of Illustrations, *3151, 5000, 414, 8187, 8824.

Root Thoughts.

"The Jew first." The people set apart to be prepared by divine training as depositaries of truth for the entire race, are first of all offered the divine grace in which divine truth culminates. Before the reservoir among the hills is connected with the plains below, the people who live on its borders are invited to drink of the crystal waters. It is for others, but it is first for them. It begins with them, but is not designed for them alone. So was the Gospel a fountain for the race, though during the period of its development in the temporary keeping of the Jews.

The commission of Christ before he left the world had in it the seeds of this universal grace. Being what it is, and coming whence it does, the Gospel must go on—every-where.

This lesson is a chapter in the steady and sure development of this gracious universality of purpose: Pentecost; the preparation of the early disciples; Peter and all the rest; the persecutions which scattered them; the vision sent to Cornelius; the vision sent to Peter; the overflow of gospel truth to the Gentiles; the gift of the Holy Ghost coming in connection with this overflow; the calling of Saul with Barnabas; the germs of the missionary movement; the sympathetic mission of relief; all these are parts of a scheme out of which should come a gospel for all the world.

At last, Saul, the Damascene convert, finds his sphere. It is neither at Damascus nor Jerusalem, nor Tarsus, but midway between, at Antioch, whence he goes forth to the islands, and Asia Minor, and Europe. He was educated to

preach to the Greeks the gospel given to the Jews. He was pre-eminently the Hebrew prophet to the Gentiles.

The commission from Jerusalem to Antioch could find no fault with the work at Antioch. It was too broad for their notions, but the Lord was there, and the divine presence broke the bands of prejudice.

A good preparation for *foreign* missionary work is *home* mission work. Saul went to Jerusalem before he went westward.

A good preparation for spiritual work in behalf of souls is philanthropic work for the bodies of men.

Practical Thoughts.

[THE MODEL CHRISTIAN CHURCH.]

1. It was a Church founded by men whose faithfulness had been tried by persecution. Ver. 19.

2. It was a Church of lay workers, and established through the instrumentality of lay-preaching. Vers. 20, 21.

3. It was a Church in which for the first time the distinctions between Jew and Gentile were forgotten in the larger brotherhood of Christ. Ver. 20.

4. It was a Church whose divine origin was shown by a rapid and powerful progress. Ver. 21.

5. It was a Church which impressed the sincere observer (Barnabas) with the manifest tokens of enjoying the grace of God. Vers. 22-24.

6. It was a Church which attracted notice from the outward world, and impressed itself upon the community. Ver. 26.

7. It was a Church which developed the working power of its members. Vers. 25, 26. See also Acts 13. 1.

8. It was a Church which recognized the unity of the various branches of Christianity, and showed the fraternal spirit. Vers. 25-27.

9. It was a Church which gave liberally to the needs of the work, recognizing the connective bond. Vers. 27-30.

10. It was a Church which recognized the importance of the world's salvation, and sent forth the first band of missionaries. Vers. 13-20.

A. D. 44.]

LESSON VIII.

[May 20.

HEROD AND PETER.—Acts 12. 1-17.

GOLDEN TEXT.—The angel of the Lord encampeth round about them that fear him.—PSA. 34. 7.

TIME.—A. D. 44.

PLACE.—Jerusalem.

INTRODUCTION.—It is uncertain whether this event took place during the time of the last lesson, or a little after it. Barnabas and Saul may have been on their way to Jerusalem with the gifts of the Christians at Antioch when Herod slew one of the apostles and strove to slay another, and they may have heard of this miraculous release on their arrival at the city. The Church at Jerusalem, though no longer the controlling body of the disciples for the world, is still dear to the heart of its ascended Head, and its destinies are watched over by a protecting Providence.

Authorized Version.

1 Now about that time Herod the king^a stretched forth his hands¹ to vex certain of the church.

2 And he killed James² the brother of John with a sword.

^a Or, began. —¹ Matt. 10. 17. —² Matt. 4. 21; 20. 23.

1. **About that time**—Alford thinks this was before Barnabas and Saul carried the gifts of the Antioch Christians to Jerusalem. **Herod the king**—Herod Agrippa. He was a grandson of Herod the Great, brother of Herodias, and father of the Agrippa mentioned in chaps 25 and 26; was brought up at the court of the Emperor Tiberius; received from the Emperor Caligula the tetrarchies of Philip and Sysanias; won the title of king; subsequently, the tetrarchy of Antipas was added to his dominions; and finally, by Claudius he was set over the whole territory that had formally been subject to the rule of Herod the Great. He assiduously cultivated the goodwill of the Jews. He was an Idumean by birth, and a Roman by education, and excessively luxurious in his personal tastes, so that he introduced into Jerusalem theaters and amphitheaters and games and gladiatorial spectacles; but he was also, both from policy and from a certain sentiment of superstitious reverence, ardently attached to the Jewish ceremonial, and regular in his offering of sacrifices in the temple. Thus his twofold character accords with his course here; he would be naturally hostile to a faith which was subversive of Judaism, ready to conciliate Jewish favor by persecuting its adherents, and quick to accept the deification proffered him by the multitude. — *L. Abbott*. Paley remarks upon the striking proof of Luke's historical accuracy here exhibited. Save the three years of Herod Agrippa's reign, there had been no king of Judea for thirty years;

Revised Version.

12 Now about that time Herod the king put forth his hands to afflict

2 certain of the church. And he killed James the brother of John with the

there was one after him, yet Luke, perfectly incidentally, places a king with the right name in the right place.—*Whedon*. To vex [Rev. Ver., *To afflict*.] — The Greek verb here used strictly means to *make bad*, and is once applied to moral influence, but commonly to persecution or oppression.—*J. A. Alexander*. **Certain of the Church**—Rather, *certain* selected from the Church, being, doubtless, its leaders, since, if the shepherds are slain the sheep are scattered.—*Whedon*.

The Lord reigneth, and for a time he threw a shield round the chiefs of the infant Church. While the flax is only smoking he will not permit a blast to blow on it, lest the feeble life should be quenched, but when the fire has gained some head, he allows the blast to come, that it may be fanned into a greater flame.—*Arnot*.

2. **And he killed**—The family of Herod, like that of Saul, might be termed a "bloody house," (2 Sam. 21. 1,) and the Herods bloody men. The grandfather ordered the massacre of the children of Bethlehem when Christ was born; an uncle caused John the Baptist to be beheaded; the grandson now sullies his hands with the blood of James, and would willingly have committed other atrocious acts.—*Rieger*. **James the brother of John**—He had stood by Jesus at the bedside of the daughter of Jairus, and on the holy mount, and in the agony of the garden; had once wished to call down fire from heaven on those who treated his Lord with incivility; had helped to urge the claim that he

Authorized Version.

3 And because he saw it pleased the Jews, he proceeded further to take Pe'ter also. (Then were ³the days of unleavened bread.)

4 And ⁴when he had apprehended him, he put *him* in prison, and delivered *him* to four quaternions of soldiers to keep him; intending after Easter to bring him forth to the people.

³ Exod. 12. 14.—⁴ John 21. 18.

might sit in closest proximity to his throne of judgment. There is a deep lesson in the circumstance that he should, meekly and silently, in utter self-renouncement, with no visible consolation, with no elaborate eulogy, amid no pomp of circumstance, with not even a recorded burial, perish first of the faithful few who had forsaken all to follow Christ, and so be the first to fulfill the warning prophecy that he should drink of his bitter cup, and be baptized with his fiery baptism.—*Farrar*. This is the only apostle of whose death we have any certain record. With regard to all the rest, tradition varies, more or less, as to the place, or the manner, or the time of their deaths.—*Alford*. With the sword—The instrument of his beheading, ordered summarily and without trial. Thus, under a Roman procurator the Jews were restrained from taking Christian life; but the moment a native king ruled blood began to flow.—*Whedon*.

Eusebius relates, from a work of Clemens, who had received it by tradition of those before him, that the accuser of James, struck by his confession, became a Christian, and was led away with him to martyrdom. As they went to execution, he asked the apostle's forgiveness. After a moment's thought he replied, "Peace be to thee," and kissed him; and so both were beheaded together.—*Alford*.

3. He saw it pleased the Jews—Thus in a single touch does Luke strike the keynote of Agrippa's policy, which was an unscrupulous desire for such popularity as could be earned by identifying himself with Jewish prejudices.—*Farrar*. All sects and parties were united in aggravated hatred of the new teaching, after the admission of Gentiles into the Church without circumcision.—*Canon Cook*. To take [Rev. Ver., *Seize*.] Peter also—The apostle may perhaps have thought that the time had come for the fulfillment of his Lord's words. John 13. 36.—*Canon Cook*. Unleavened bread—The Passover. No criminal was executed during that week.—*Whedon*.

Revised Version.

3 sword. And when he saw that it pleased the Jews, he proceeded to seize Pe'ter also. And *those* were the 4 days of unleavened bread. And when he had taken him, he put him in prison, and delivered him to four quaternions of soldiers to guard him; intending after the Passover to bring

Blood to the blood-thirsty does but make them more so; and the way of persecution, as of other sins, is down hill; when men are in it they cannot easily stop themselves; when they are in they find they must on.—*M. Henry*.

4. Put him in prison—The modern Oriental prison, probably, in its general character, resembles that of ancient times. It is usually connected with the governor's house; the prisoners are allowed the freedom of the yard by day; the guards *sit* about armed, and often conversing with their prisoners. People come and go, bringing provisions. Prisoners of state are sometimes chained to their guards.—*L. Abbott*. Four quaternions is not a mere periphrasis for *sixteen*, as the Peshito renders it, but a technical expression borrowed from the Roman discipline or art of war, in which the night was divided into four watches, and each of these intrusted to four soldiers, who succeeded or relieved each other every three hours.—*J. A. Alexander*. Intending after Easter (Rev. Ver., *Passover*.)—Easter celebrates the resurrection of our Lord, which took place during the passover week, which lasted from 14th to 21st Nisan; the phrase has been improperly used here by our translators, in order to designate to the English reader the real time of the occurrence. The word so rendered is everywhere else in the New Testament translated Passover.—*L. Abbott*. To bring him forth—For public trial, (John 19. 13,) the issue of which was predetermined.—*Canon Cook*. To the people—Not as judges, but as spectators, in some great assembly, either for amusement, or to witness Peter's execution.—*J. A. Alexander*.

Herod intended to slay Peter; but it was the Lord's will to preserve Peter and slay Herod.—*Brandt*.

Peter . . . in prison, but—Herod, make thy preparations, if thou wilt, but they cannot be of avail; they are opposed by a powerful *But*, which thou canst not overcome.—What is

Authorized Version.

5 Pe'ter therefore was kept in prison: but ^b prayer was made without ceasing of the church unto God for him.

6 And when Her'od would have brought him forth, the same night Pe'ter was sleeping between two soldiers, bound with two chains; and the keepers before the door kept the prison.

7 And, behold, ^c the angel of the Lord came upon him, and a light shined in the prison: and he smote Pe'ter on the side, and raised him up, saying, Arise up quickly. And his chains fell off from his hands.

^b Or, instant and earnest prayer was made; 2 Cor. 1. 11; Eph. 6. 18.
^c Chap. 5. 19; Heb. 1. 14.

this *But*? Apparently less than nothing—mere prayers! And yet a single word of believing prayer can overthrow all the power of hell. Why may it not then prevail against Herod and his sixteen soldiers?—*Lechler*. **Prayer was made without ceasing** [Rev. Ver., *Earnestly*.]—Probably anticipating the death of Peter to follow that of James, their prayer was that he might be rescued if it was the Lord's will, otherwise that he might be strengthened to suffer and die for him. Remembering how, before, he had denied his Lord, the disciples may well have been intense in their prayer for divine grace to sustain him now. The trial of his faith in this imprisonment and waiting was especially severe to a man of Peter's impetuous disposition, who could *dare* much, but by nature *endure* but little.—*L. Abbott*.

There are no quarternions of soldiers can keep the passage shut that is toward heaven.—*M. Pool*.

6. When Herod would have brought him forth [Rev. Ver., *Was about to bring him forth*.]—On the night before his expected trial



Roman Prisoner Chained.

and execution. **Peter was sleeping**—An indication, when coupled with his subsequent history, of his trust in God, and of his steadfast

Revised Version.

5 him forth to the people. Pe'ter therefore was kept in the prison: but prayer was made earnestly of the church unto God for him. And when Her'od was about to bring him forth, the same night Pe'ter was sleeping between two soldiers, bound with two chains: and guards before the door 7 kept the prison. And behold, an angel of the Lord stood by him, and a light shined in the cell: and he smote Pe'ter on the side, and awoke him, saying, Rise up quickly. And his 8 chains fell off from his hands. And

purpose. If he had been divided in mind between the purpose of fidelity and the desire of personal safety, he would not have slept.—*L. Abbott*. **Bound with two chains**—A light chain, each attached by the one end to the prisoner, by the other to a soldier. "The same chain," says Seneca, "couples the prisoner and the guard."—*Whedon*. **Keepers** [Rev. Ver., *Guards*] **before the door**—The door here is probably the gate leading out into the street from the inner courtyard, around which the prison was built.—*L. Abbott*.

I question whether Herod, that imprisoned him, slept half so soundly.—*Burkitt*.

That lovely bird of Paradise, Christian content, can sit and sing in a cage of affliction and confinement, or fly at liberty through the vast expanse of heaven, with almost equal satisfaction, while "Even so, Father; for so it seemeth good in thy sight," is the chief note in its celestial song.—*Swain*.

7. The angel [Rev. Ver., *An angel*] of the Lord—The phrase is identical with that of Luke 2. 9. The absence of the article in the Greek leaves it open to render it either as "*the* angel," or "*an* angel." The "*light*" in this instance corresponds to the "*glory of the Lord*" in that.—*E. H. Plumptre*. **Came upon him** [Rev. Ver., *Stood by him*.] **A light shined in the prison** [Rev. Ver., *Cell*.]—The angel brings to the prisoner no lantern, lamp, or candle; yet he brings a *light*, the beaming of his own person. Peter sees by it his prison, his chains, his cloak, his sandals, and his emancipator.—*Whedon*. **He smote Peter**—This, and the direction to gird himself, etc., in the next verse, was to arouse Peter, to convince him that it was not a dream, and to leave in his recollection a testimony of the reality of the angelic appearance.—

Authorized Version.

8 And the angel said unto him, Gird thyself, and bind on thy sandals. And so he did. And he said unto him, Cast thy garment about thee and follow me.

9 And he went out, and followed him; and ⁶wist not that it was true which was done by the angel; but thought he ⁷saw a vision.

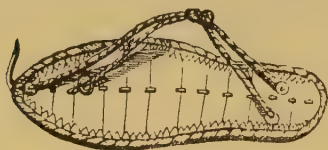
10 When they were past the first and the second ward, they came unto the iron gate that leadeth unto the city; which ⁸opened to them of his own accord: and they went out, and passed on through one street; and forthwith the angel departed from him.

⁶ Psa. 126. 1.—⁷ Chap. 10. 3.—⁸ 1. Iap. 16. 26.

L. Abbott. Raised him up—Assisted him to rise, partly as a further means of arousing him and bringing him to himself.—*L. Abbott.*

Prayer had gone up, and an angel comes down. How quickly prayer is answered! How swift the passage of the angel from heaven to earth! How easily he finds his way to Jerusalem, to its prison, to the cell where Peter lay chained!—*H. Bomar.*

8. Gird thyself—This command to dress himself completely and deliberately may have been intended both to show him the reality of what he witnessed and to assure him of immediate liberation. This is perfectly consistent with the call to arise quickly. Hesitation in arising would have argued unbelieving doubts;



Sandal.

undue haste in departure unbelieving fears.—*J. A. Alexander.* Bind on thy sandals—The sandal, which did not cover the foot, but was simply a sole of wood or leather underneath the foot, was bound on it by straps or thongs of leather in a manner analogous to that of a skate in modern times.—*L. Abbott.* Cast thy garment—This cloak was an outer garment, a sort of shawl or blanket, used as a cloak by day and a covering by night. This had been Peter's covering; he was to wrap it about him as a protection in going out into the night air. These directions all indicate a certain degree of leisure, and also the completeness of his deliverance.

Revised Version.

the angel said unto him, Gird thyself, and bind on thy sandals. And he did so. And he saith unto him, Cast thy garment about thee, and follow me.

9 And he went out, and followed; and he wist not that it was true which was done ¹by the angel, but thought he
10 saw a vision. And when they were past the first and the second ward, they came unto the iron gate that leadeth into the city; which opened to them of its own accord: and they went out, and passed on through one street; and straightway the angel
11 parted from him. And when Pe'ter

¹ Or, through.

He not only escapes himself, he leaves no article of his attire behind him.—*L. Abbott.* None of his effects are to be left behind in the hands of his enemies, so that his departure may not resemble the flight of a criminal. "There shall not a hoof be left behind." Exod. 10. 26.—*Brandt.* Thought he saw a vision—As in the activity of somnambulism, the will directed the actions of the body, and yet was only half-conscious of what it did. It may be noted that his experience of the trance and vision narrated in chap. 10 would tend to suggest the impression that he was passing through phenomena of a like kind.—*E. H. Plumptre.*

9. Went out and followed—And he might go with a great deal of courage and cheerfulness who had a messenger from heaven for his guide and guard.—*M. Henry.*

10. Past the first and the second ward—The terms *ward* and *guard* are but different forms of the same word. The first *guard* was the two keepers of the four to whom Peter was chained; the second was the two of the quaternion at the door of his particular room or cell.—*Whedon.* Came unto the iron gate—It is probable that the prison was within the city, and the gate here referred to was the one leading from the prison courtyard out into the street.—*L. Abbott.* The touch of topographical precision may be noticed as characteristic of Luke.—*E. H. Plumptre.* One street—That is, probably, the length of one. The reference may be either to a particular street, or to a customary measure like our square, block, etc.—*J. A. Alexander.* The angel departed—"Departed" is in Greek the converse of the verb employed in verse 7, a relation which can only be expressed in English by some such combination as "appeared" and "disappeared."—*J. A. Alexander.*

Authorized Version.

11 And when Pe'ter was come to himself, he said, Now I know of a surety, that ^a the Lord hath sent his angel, and ¹⁰ hath delivered me out of the hand of Her'od, and from all the expectation of the people of the Jews.

12 And when he had considered *the thing*, he ¹¹ came to the house of Ma'ry the mother of ¹² John, whose surname was Mark; where many were gathered together praying.

13 And as Pe'ter knocked at the door of the gate, a damsel came ^c to hearken, named Rho'da.

^b Psa. 34. 7; Dan. 6. 22.—¹⁰ Job 5. 19; Psa. 33. 18; 97. 10; 2 Pet. 2. 9.—¹¹ Chap. 4. 23.—¹² Chap. 15. 37.—^c Or, to ask who was there.

The iron gate.—Striking emblem how God may cause obstacles to move themselves out of the way of those who tread the path of his assignment.—*Whedon.*

11. When he came to himself—From the bewilderment of his sudden working and strange surroundings. It aided his coming to himself to be in a familiar spot with no company but *himself*.—*Whedon.* **Now I know of a surety** [Rev. Ver., *Of a truth.*].—He was before in the half-consciousness of one who is dreaming and knows that it is a dream, except that in his case the dream was *the truth*, and his supposition the unreality.—*Alford.* **Hath delivered me**—This deliverance may be rightfully regarded as a symbol of divine redemption in that it is by one whom the Lord hath sent, is afforded to those in captivity and without hope and ransoms from the king and kingdom of evil and from death.—*L. Abbott.* **The people of the Jews**—The Jewish people—not merely individuals, but the whole community, which seems to have acted with great unanimity, as well in showing favor as in manifesting hatred.—*J. A. Alexander.*

12. The house of Mary—She is mentioned only here, but we learn from Col. 4. 10 that she was *unt* (not *sister*) to Barnabas. It is surmised that when Barnabas sold his land for the benefit of the Church she opened her house to be used as one of its chief places of meeting. Tradition fixed the site as on the upper slope of Zion, and affirmed that the building, saved from the general destruction at the capture of Jerusalem by Titus, was still used as a church in the fourth century.—*L. Abbott.* **John whose surname was Mark**—[See Lesson IX, ver. 5, note.] John is Hebrew, Mark (*Marcus*) is Latin. The person is doubtless the author of the Gospel of Mark; he was converted through the

Revised Version.

was come to himself, he said, Now I know of a truth, that the Lord hath sent forth his angel and delivered me out of the hand of Her'od, and from all the expectation of the people of

12 the Jews. And when he had considered *the thing*, he came to the house of Mary the mother of John whose surname was Mark; where many were gathered together and were praying. And when he knocked at the door of the gate, a maid came to answer, named Rho'da. And when she

instrumentality of Peter. 1 Pet. 5. 13.—*L. Abbott.* His Roman surname is brought into more



A Palestinian House.

frequent use because of his increasing intercourse with Gentiles. He may have been in his mother's house at this time, and have supplied Luke with particulars for this most graphic account. **Canon Cook.** **Many were gathered**—This was a midnight assembly of the Christians, either for fear of their Jewish enemies, or more probably on account of the pressing necessity and importance of the case. Ver. 5. The primitive Christians in those times of peril held their sacred assemblies in the night season; and afterward in peaceful times these nocturnal assemblies were continued, owing to their greater solemnity, and on account of a prevalent persuasion that the Lord Jesus would come during the night.—*P. J. Gloag.*

13. Knocked at the door of the gate—"The door of the gate" is the outer or street door; the door of the porch, or entrance way to the house. This outer door or gate sometimes has a smaller door cut into it, which can be more

Authorized Version.

14 And when she knew Pe'ter's voice, she opened not the gate for gladness, but ran in, and told how Pe'ter stood before the gate.

15 And they said unto her, Thou art mad. But she constantly affirmed that it was even so. Then said they, It ¹³ is his angel.

16 But Pe'ter continued knocking: and when they had opened *the door*, and saw him, they were astonished.

17 But he, beckoning unto them with the hand to hold their peace, declared unto them how the Lord had brought him out of prison. And he said, Go show these things unto James, and to the brethren. And he departed, and went into another place.

¹³ Gen. 48. 16; Matt. 18. 10.

readily opened, and is more frequently used than the large door of which it forms a part. Some writers think that a door of this description is referred to in the text.—*J. M. Freeman.* **To hearken** [Rev. Ver., *To answer.*].—The verb rendered "to hearken" is one used in the classics to signify an answer to a knock or call at the door.—*L. Abbott.* **Rhoda**—Signifying *rose bush*. The mention of this name, with the maiden's behavior, marks the thorough minuteness of the narrative.—*Whedon.*

14. When she knew Peter's voice—An indication that Peter had before been a frequent visitor at the house. Her gladness indicates that she shared the anxiety of the disciples for him, and perhaps his kindness and consideration for one who occupied the inferior station of a portress. His epistle indicates sympathy with servants and an appreciation of their peculiar trials, 1 Pet. 2. 18-20.—*L. Abbott.* **She ran in and told**—The eager desire to tell the good news that their prayers had been answered overpowers her presence of mind. There is something characteristic of the writer in this analysis of a state of consciousness.—*E. H. Plumptre.*

15. Thou art mad—So slow are even the best of men to believe the goodness of God.—*J. Milner.* **Said they, It is his angel**—Our Lord plainly asserts the doctrine of guardian angels in Matt. 18. 10, and from this we further learn in what sense his words were understood by the early Church. From his words, "*Take heed that ye despise not one of these little ones,*" taken with the context, we infer that *each one* has his guardian angel. From this passage we find not only that such was believed to be the

Revised Version.

knew Pe'ter's voice, she opened not the gate for joy, but ran in, and told that Pe'ter stood before the gate.

15 And they said unto her, Thou art mad. But she confidently affirmed that it was even so. And they said,

16 It is his angel. But Pe'ter continued knocking: and when they had opened, they saw him, and were amazed.

17 But he, beckoning unto them with the hand to hold their peace, declared unto them how the Lord had brought him forth out of the prison. And he said, Tell these things unto James, and to the brethren. And he departed, and went to another place.

case, but that it was supposed that such angel occasionally appeared in the semblance (seeing that he spoke with the voice) of the person himself. We do not, it is true, know who the speakers were, nor is the peculiar form in which they viewed the doctrine binding upon us; it may have been erroneous, and savoring of superstition. But of the doctrine itself this may not be said, as the Lord himself has asserted it.—*Alford.*

16. Peter continued knocking—Peter might be unwilling to have his entrance into the house deferred, (1) Out of fear of being taken again, and his life being concerned upon it. (2) Out of an earnest desire to see the brethren whom he might hope to meet with there. (3) Out of zeal to declare the mercy of God toward him; this fire was kindled in him, and he sought vent for it.—*M. Pool.* **Opened the door**—The implication is that the party, or at least several of them, went to and opened the door.—*L. Abbott.* **They were astonished** [Rev. Ver., *Amazed.*].—Their prayer was for Peter's liberation, their astonishment indicates how small was their expectation of an answer. How often are we astonished at an affirmative reply to even our most earnest and hopeful prayers.—*L. Abbott.*

17. Beckoning . . . to hold their peace—Because their clamor was so great that he could not make them hear his voice to hush them.—*Whedon.* Any loud expression of their feelings might have exposed the apostle to fresh peril.—*Canon Cook.* **Unto James**—The apostle James is slain, Peter is banished, the entire apostolic body has probably disappeared, and

the supervision of the Christian cause seems to devolve upon the *Lord's brother*.—*Whedon*. **He departed**—His motive was *haste*; he tells briefly the particulars of his deliverance, and, while it was yet night, hastily departs.—*Alford*. Peter was delivered from prison in order to escape danger, and his departure was no cowardice, but merely a compliance with the intimations of providence. He followed the injunction of Christ: "When they persecute you in one city, flee ye to another."—*P. J. Gloag*. Into [Rev. Ver., To] **another place**—Commentators have been as much exercised to tell where Peter went on this occasion as Herod Agrippa doubtless was, and with quite as little success. The Romanists say that he went to Rome and there founded the popedom; had the which been true, Luke would have known it and told it. Luke simply means that Peter sought some *other locality* than Jerusalem for safety.—*Whedon*.

The apostle sleeps; a light shines in the prison,
An angel touched his side;
Arise, he said; and quickly he hath risen,
His fettered arms untied.

The watchmen saw no light at midnight gleaming,
They heard no sound of feet;
The gates fly open, and the saint, still dreaming,
Stands free upon the street.

So when the Christian's eyelid droops and closes,
In nature's parting strife,
A friendly angel stands where he reposes,
To wake him up to life.

He gives a gentle blow, and so releases
The spirit from its clay;
From sin's temptations, and from life's distresses,
He bids it come away.

It rises up, and from its darksome mansion
It takes its silent flight,
And feels its freedom in the large expansion,
Of heavenly air and light.

Behind, it hears Time's iron gates close faintly,
It is now far from them;
For it has reached the city of the saintly,
The New Jerusalem.—*J. D. Burns*.

Authorities to be Consulted.

Farrar's Life of St. Paul, chap. xvii. Peter the Apostle, (Dr. W. M. Taylor,) 800. The Church in the House, 277. Freeman's Bible Manners and Customs, Nos. 818, 830, 831, 832, 833, 854. Stems and Twigs, i, 137. Keble's Christian Year. Bonar's Bible Thoughts and Themes, iii, 140. Land and Book, ii, 192. On "James the Brother of the Lord," see Alford's New Testament, Introduction to Epistle of James.

Gloag on Acts, i, 422. Article "James," in Smith's Dictionary of the Bible. Andrews' Life of our Lord, pp. 97-108. Foster's Cyclopaedia of Illustrations [Figures marked with a star refer to poetical volumes]—ver. 2: *3563; vers. 3-11: 7614; vers. 3-19: *3896; ver. 5: *3871; ver. 7: 11191; ver. 8: 2626; ver. 9: 11748; ver. 15: 6490; ver. 17: 6513, 9964.

Root Thoughts.

The angels must have a part in this great ministry. They "desire to look into these things" which are going on in the world and historically unfolding the Divine character and purposes. They are interested in the examination of redemption, for the gospel raises saints who shall be companions with the "innumerable company of angels" in the heavenly places. They are also glad to serve as "ministering spirits."

When the powers of this world—the Herods and the Sanhedrims—concentrate their power, angelic reinforcements rally to the defense of the saints. Satanic schemes are foiled by angelic interpositions. Peter was rescued through the ministry of an angel.

We do not care *how* it was done. In science the deepest things elude the skill and research of scholars. Why shall we complain if the philosophy of the Divine operations be as difficult of apprehension? Scientific men lay hold of facts which are facts none the less because the origin, the reason, and the relations of them are not fully understood. God saves his saints, and he uses angels to help.

The angel helped Peter, but still required Peter to help himself. The responsibility and power of the saint are not diminished because of angelic assistance.

God's work outreaches human expectation. By the power of God Peter got out of prison, but through the unbelief of man Peter was delayed at the closed gate beyond which the disciples were praying for him.

Poor little Rhoda was powerless to open the gate through very gladness. Her joy made her forget practical duty at the moment. It is often the case that the every-day duties are omitted through the ecstasies and delights of religious experience. It was good for Rhoda to be glad: it would have been better if Rhoda's gladness had not allowed her to keep the door closed against the disciple.

The divine power is mightier than all human combinations, imperial purposes, and prison bars.

Practical Thoughts.

[GOD'S PEOPLE IN TROUBLE.]

1. After a season of rest for the Church's growth comes a season of trial for the Church's purifying. Ver. 1.

2. When one disciple falls by the sword and another is delivered from the sword, God knows which has the highest privilege, and reflects the most honor upon the Gospel. Vers. 2, 3.

3. The deepest trouble and the greatest peril only afford a better opportunity for the display of God's power. Ver. 4.

4. In time of trouble, God's people should be all the more unceasing and earnest in their prayers. Ver. 5.

5. In the deepest trouble the disciple of Christ can enjoy peace and rest with quiet heart. Ver. 6.

6. In time of trouble God's eye is upon his child, and his angels wait on him with their ministrations. Ver. 7.

7. God's messengers bring with them a light which irradiates the prison darkness, and a power to overcome all the plans of men. Vers. 7, 8.

8. God's deliverance from trouble is sometimes so wonderful that it seems like a dream. Ver. 9.

9. The prayers of believers are sometimes answered so fully as to surprise their faith. Ver. 14.

A. D. 45.]

LESSON IX.

[May 27.

PAUL AND BARNABAS IN CYPRUS.—Acts 13. 1-12.

GOLDEN TEXT.—Separate me Barnabas and Saul for the work whereunto I have called them.

—ACTS 13. 2.

TIME.—A. D. 45.

PLACES.—Antioch in Syria, and the island of Cyprus.

CONNECTING LINKS.—(1) The death of Herod Agrippa. Acts 12. 18-23. (2) The return of Saul and Barnabas to Antioch. Acts 12. 24, 25.

INTRODUCTION.—Hitherto Christianity had been propagated in a measure by informal efforts and casual occurrences; the persecution at Jerusalem having given rise to the dispersion of the Christians and the diffusion of their opinions. But now the church at Antioch plans measures and makes regular efforts to extend the Gospel among the heathen. Paul and Barnabas are sent forth as the first Christian missionaries—the forerunners of that noble band of Christian heroes who sacrifice every thing in order to diffuse the unsearchable riches of Christ among the Gentiles.—*P. J. Gloag.*

Authorized Version.

1 Now there were ¹in the church that was at An'ti-och certain prophets and

Revised Version.

13 Now there were at An'ti-och, in the church that was *there*, prophets

¹ Chap. 14. 26.

1. In the church . . . at Antioch [Rev.



Ver., *At Antioch, in the church that was there.*]

See Note on Antioch, Lesson VII, verse 19.—As the first city in which a

church gathered directly from the Gentiles was founded, and as the spot where the illustrious name of "Christian" was first heard, Antioch has special claims to our regard, and has the right to be looked upon as the mother church of Gentile Christendom. If the map be consulted it will be seen that Antioch is situated nearly in the angle where the coast line of Cili-

cia, running eastward, and that of Palestine, extending northward, are brought to an abrupt meeting. By its harbor of Seleucia, Antioch was in communication with all the trade of the Mediterranean; and through the open country behind the Lebanon it could be conveniently approached by the caravans of Mesopotamia and Arabia. There was, in fact, every thing in the situation and circumstances of the city to render it a place of most miscellaneous concourse; and in the time of the apostles it was an Oriental Rome, in which all the forms of civilized life in the empire found some representative.—*Kitto.*

Prophets and teachers—The two were not necessarily identical, (Eph. 4. 11,) though the higher gift of prophecy commonly included the lower gift of teaching. The former implies a

Authorized Version.

teachers; as ² Bar'na-bas, and Sim'e-on that was called Ni'ger, and Lu'ci-us ³ of Cy-re'ne, and Man'a-en, ^a which had been brought up with Her'od the tetrarch, and Saul.

2 As they ministered to the Lord, and fasted, the Holy Ghost said, Separate ⁴ me Bar'na-bas and Saul for the work ⁵ whereunto I have called them.

Revised Version.

and teachers. Bar'na-bas, and Sym'e-on that was called Ni'ger, and Lu'ci-us of Cy-re'ne, and Man'a-en the foster-brother of Her'od the tetrarch, and

2 Saul. And as they ministered to the Lord, and fasted, the Holy Ghost said, Separate me Bar'na-bas and Saul for the work whereunto I have called

² Chap. 11. 22. — ³ Rom. 16. 21. — ^a Or, Herod's foster brother.
⁴ Num. 8. 14; Gal. 1. 15; 2. 9. — ⁵ Matt. 9. 38; Rom. 10. 15;
 Eph. 3. 7, 8; 1 Tim. 2. 7; Heb. 5. 4.

more direct message from God, coming through the Holy Ghost; the latter a more systematic instruction, in which reason and reflection also bore their part.—*E. H. Plumptre.* **Barnabas**—See notes Lesson IV, verse 27, and Lesson VII, verse 22. To us Barnabas must always be a less memorable figure than Paul, but let us not forget that up to this time he had held a higher rank, and wielded a more authoritative influence. As a Levite, as a prophet, as one who, for the needs of the community, had cheerfully sacrificed his earthly goods, as one who enjoyed to a very high degree the confidence of the apostles, Barnabas, in these early days, was enabled to lend to Paul's conceptions a weight which they could hardly otherwise have won.—*Farrar.* **Simeon . . . called Ni'ger**—The name seems to indicate the swarth complexion of Africa; but nothing more is known of him. The epithet was given to him, probably, to distinguish him from the many others of the same name, possibly, in particular, from Simon of Cyrene.—*E. H. Plumptre.* **Dr. Whedon** regards this as the same with Simon of Cyrene who carried the Saviour's cross. Luke 23. 26. **Lucius of Cyrene**—Lucius, probably the same who is mentioned in the Epistle to the Romans, is a native of Cyrene, that African city which has already been mentioned as abounding in Jews. [See note First Quarter, Lesson II, verse 10.]—*Conybeare and Howson.* Probably one of the company of men of "Cyprus and Cyrene" (chap. 11. 20) who had been among the first evangelists of Antioch.—*E. H. Plumptre.* **Manaen, which had been brought up with** [Rev. Ver., *The foster brother of.*]—Either his mother was nurse of Herod Antipas, so that both were nourished at the same breast, or he was his *mate*, associated, as was often the case, to incite the young prince to good conduct. It was singular that such a man should, while Herod was in his dismal exile in Lyons, be in this great metropolis a Christian *teacher*.—*Whedon.* Hebrew *Manahem*, the name of a king of

Israel. 2 Kings 15. 14. There was, according to Josephus, an Essene of this name, who foretold to Herod the Great his future attainment of the crown, and was ever held in great honor by Herod after he became king. Quite likely this was a son of that associated with Herod Antipas, as the former was favored by the first Herod. Manaen is probably an instance of one who passed from Essenism to Christianity, and became of the saints in Herod's household.—*Whedon.* **With Herod the tetrarch**—Herod Antipas, tetrarch of Galilee, who never received the royal title, is here meant, the same who slew John the Baptist, and who is called in the Gospels "Herod the tetrarch," (Luke 8. 1.) A comrade of his must have been a man advanced in life.—*P. J. Glog.* **And Saul** [See Lesson VII, verses 25, 26.]—The man of the most singular antecedents and of the most brilliant future comes last, as far as the youngest and the latest converted. The last shall be first.—*Whedon.*

2. **They**—These five Christian ministers alone. Nothing is said of any others as being present or sharing.—*Whedon.* **Ministered**—In prayer, praise, and, perhaps, sacramental communion. It was a special devotional assemblage of these five eminent men, probably intended to learn the will of God in the promotion of the Christian cause.—*Whedon.* Fasting in the New Testament appears to have always accompanied some special service, and been indicative of some special desire for divine guidance or assistance. Chap. 10. 30; 14. 23. It is therefore reasonable to suppose that this service was special in its character; not improbably the disciples were seeking for guidance on the question of their duty toward the great outlying heathen population.—*L. Abbott.* **The Holy Ghost said**—The mode of communication we may believe to have been, as in chap. 20. 23, through the lips of the prophets; speaking as by a sudden burst of simultaneous inspiration. Comp. 1 Tim. 1. 18.—*E. H. Plumptre.* **Separate me Barnabas and Saul**—Barnabas had

Authorized Version.

3 And when they had fasted and prayed and laid *their* hands on them, they sent *them* away.

4 So they, being sent forth by the Holy Ghost, departed unto Se-leu'ci-a; and from thence they sailed to 'Cy'prus.

6 Chap. 4. 36.

already been tried, and found faithful. His gravity, his authority, and his benevolence seemed to point him out as leader of the expedition. When the pair departed it was Barnabas and Saul; when they returned it was Paul and Barnabas.—*W. Arnot.* **Unto the work**—In general it had already been pointed out in the case of Saul. Chap. 9. 15; 22. 21; 26. 17. It consisted in preaching to the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ. Eph. 3. 8. In virtue of the foundation of the Gentile Churches being intrusted to them, Saul and Barnabas become after this apostles.—*Alford.* **I have called**—The Spirit gave the *call*; the ministers authenticated that call to men by visibly laying their hands upon the persons of these same men, and no other. To all, then, who recognized the authority or acknowledged the weight of character of these layers-on of hands, the men sent were duly certified.—*Whedon.* Which words prove both the deity and personality of the Holy Ghost; he who calls ministers to the office, and unto whose service they are separated, is both God and a distinct person in the Godhead.—*Burkitt.*

The very soul of our religion is missionary, progressive, world-embracing; it would cease to exist if it ceased to be missionary, if it disregarded the parting words of its Founder, "Go ye, therefore, and teach all nations," etc. The spirit of truth is the life-spring of all religion, and, where it exists, it must manifest itself, it must plead, it must persuade, it must convince and convert. There may be times when silence is gold and speech silver; but there are times, also, when silence is death and speech is life—the very life of Pentecost. Look at the religions in which the missionary spirit has been at work, and compare them with those in which any attempt to convince others by argument, to save souls, to bear witness to the truth, is treated with pity or scorn. *The former are alive, the latter are dying or dead.*—*Max Müller.*

3. **Fasted and prayed**—The new command called for that intensity of spiritual life of which fasting was more or less the normal condition.—*E. H. Plumptre.* **Laid their hands on them**—The imposition of hands is here used to "ordain" these men, not to an "order," but to a *mission*. It did not make them deacon,

Revised Version.

3 them. Then, when they had fasted and prayed and laid their hands on them, they sent them away.

4 So they, being sent forth by the Holy Ghost, went down to Se-leu'ci-a; and from thence they sailed to Cy'-

elder, or bishop, but *missionaries*, either for this single expedition, or to the world at large, Jew or Gentile, as the Spirit pleased. The rule that limits the laying on of hands to special permanent orders is ecclesiastical rather than biblical. The two were not certainly at this time *ordained* as apostles, for no man was ever so ordained but by Christ himself. Christ's acts ordained the twelve; his choice through the lot ordained Matthias, (1. 23-25;) his call (22. 21; 26. 17) ordained Paul, as the fullness of the Spirit authenticated him.—*Whedon.* **Sent them away**—Observe that this little church gives, not money out of its treasury, but ministers, to the missionary cause; and that it surrenders to this purpose its two most prominent pastors. Missionary work requires the best men the Church possesses.—*L. Abbott.*

4. **Sent forth by the Holy Ghost**—More conscious instruments, perhaps, of God's will than has ever been the case before or since, and starting on a journey more memorable in its issues than any which had ever been undertaken by man, Saul and Barnabas, accompanied by their more youthful attendant, John Mark, started on their way.—*Farrar.* **Seleucia**—The town was situated at the mouth of the Orontes, about sixteen miles from Antioch, and served as the port for that city. It had been built by and named after, Seleucus Nicator.—*E. H. Plumptre.* **From thence they sailed**—With



Ancient Ship.

a fair wind, a few hours would enable them to run down from Seleucia to Salamis; and the land would rapidly rise in forms well known and familiar to Barnabas and Mark.—*Conybeare and Houson.*

To Cyprus (See note, Lesson VII, verses 19, 20.)—Cyprus was an extremely fertile island, abounding in wine, oil, honey, and various mineral productions. Its inhabitants were distinguished for luxury and sensuality. It is situated in the Mediterranean Sea, north-west from Palestine, not far from

Authorized Version.

5 And when they were at Sal'a-mis, they preached the word of God in the synagogues of the Jews: and they had also John to their minister.

6 And when they had gone through the isle unto Pa'phos, they found a certain sorcerer, a false prophet, a Jew, whose name was Bar-je'sus:

† Chap. 12. 25.

the coast of Syria of Asia Minor.—*Ripley*. Several reasons may be assigned why Paul and Barnabas sailed first to Cyprus. (1) It was in the immediate neighborhood of Antioch, and no doubt there was frequent communication between the two places. (2) It was the birth-place of Barnabas, and he might be anxious to preach the Gospel in his native land. (3) There were in it numerous Jews, who, according to Merivale, constituted a half of its population. (4) Christianity had already made some progress in Cyprus; for men of Cyprus were among the number of those who preached the Gospel at Antioch.—*P. J. Gloag*.

An interesting inscription—the date of which is, however, uncertain, and may be of the second or third century after Christ—given in M. di Cesnola's *Cyprus* (p. 422), as found at Golgoi in that island, shows a yearning after something higher than the polytheism of Greece:—

*Thou, the One God,
The Greatest, the Most Glorious Name,
Help us all we beseech thee.*

—*E. H. Plumptre*.

5. Salamis was a seaport town with a good harbor, on the eastern coast of Cyprus. It stood on the north side of the River Pedieus, the only true river in the island. Salamis was partially destroyed in the insurrection of the Jews under Trajan and Hadrian, and its demolition was completed by an earthquake, but it was afterward rebuilt and named Constantia. Its site is now traced by its ruins. **Preached . . . in the synagogues**—Taking the course which history itself had marked out for them, they addressed themselves first to the Jews, (13. 5; 14. 1.) For the synagogues, and the freedom of speech which prevailed in them, afforded at once the most suitable places and the best opportunities for preaching the Gospel. Then again, these cases of the true religion in the desert of the heathen idolatry were also the places of assembly for those pious proselytes of the gate, who formed a natural bridge between Jews and Gentiles, and thus might vastly facilitate the transmission of the Gospel to the latter. But,

Revised Version.

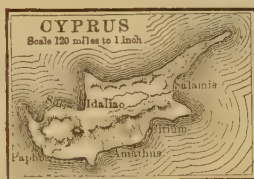
5 prus. And when they were at Sal'a-mis, they proclaimed the word of God in the synagogues of the Jews: and they had also John as their attendant.

6 And when they had gone through the whole island unto Pa'phos, they found a certain 'sorcerer, a false prophet, a Jew, whose name was Bar-Je'sus;

† Gr. *Magus*: as in Matt. 2. 1, 7, 16.

finally and chiefly: the Jews, by virtue of their peculiar position in the history of religion and the express promises of a faithful God, had, so to speak, the first claim on the gospel.—*Schaff*. **John to their minister** [Rev. Ver., as *their attendant*.]—Perhaps we are to infer from this, that Mark's hands baptized the Jews and proselytes, who were convinced by the preaching of the apostles.—*Conybeare and Howson*. Looking to the after-work of Mark, it would hardly, perhaps, be too much to say that he was, more than any other disciple, the *courier* of the Apostolic Church.—*E. H. Plumptre*.

6. Gone through the island [Rev. Ver.,



through the whole island.]—Implying that they preached in all its principal towns. **Paphos**—This city was reached by an easy jour-

ney over a Roman road of a hundred miles. Paphos was celebrated for its temple of Venus, and for the corresponding dissoluteness of its inhabitants.—*Whedon*. A local tradition reported by M. di Cesnola, (*Cyprus*, pp. 29, 223,) points out a marble column to which Paul was bound and scourged by the citizens of Paphos, who are represented as having been among the most wicked of mankind.—*E. H. Plumptre*. **A certain sorcerer** [See on "Simon the Sorcerer," Lesson I, verse 18.]—While the Jewish laws rigorously forbade all practice of witchcraft and magic, punishing it with death, (Deut. 18. 9-22; Lev. 19. 31,) the Jewish nation at this time, in common with other Eastern nations, contributed necromancers, soothsayers, and wonder-workers, who played upon and profited by the superstitions of the people, and who brought under their influence not only the lower classes, but also the aristocracy, the governors, and even the emperors of Rome. Marius, Pompey, Crassus, Cæsar, and Tiberius all consulted them.—*L. Abbott*. **False prophet**—Who falsely professed to be a prophet of the true

Authorized Version.

7 Which was with the deputy of the country, Ser'gi-us. Paul'us, a prudent man; who called for Bar'na-bas and Saul, and desired to hear the word of God.

8 But ^eEl'y-mas the sorcerer (for so is his name by interpretation) withstood them, seeking to turn away the deputy from the faith.

9 Then ^bSaul, (who also is called

^a Exod. 7, 11; ² Tim. 3, 8.—^b That is, Destroyer.

Revised Version.

7 which was with the proconsul, Ser'gi-us Paul'us, a man of understanding. The same called unto him Bar'na-bas and Saul, and sought to hear the word of

8 God. But El'y-mas the ²sorcerer (for so is his name by interpretation) withstood them, seeking to turn aside the

9 proconsul from the faith. But Saul, who is also called Paul, filled with

² Gr. *Magus*: as in Matt. 2, 1, 7, 16.

God; for, as a Jew, he would be a professor of the doctrine of one God, and his monotheistic discourse formed his doctrinal attraction to Sergius Paulus.—*Whedon*. **Bar-jesus**—The prefix *Bar* in Hebrew (like the prefix *Mac* in the Celtic) signifies *son of*; and *Bar-jesus* signifies son of Jesus or Joshua; *Jesus* being the Greek form of the Hebrew *Joshua*. It was singular that this opponent of Jesus should bear his sacred name.—*Whedon*.

7. **Was with the deputy**—He clutched a shadow; and this showed at least that he had an appetite for the substance. In his darkness he had heard of this man's pretensions, and sent for him.—*W. Arnot*. **The deputy of the country** [Rev. Ver., *the proconsul*.]—The term "deputy" here is peculiar, and means *proconsul*. It was for a long time thought that there was an error in the history here, as this was not the common title of the governor. But a passage was at length discovered in Dio Cassius, showing that Augustus gave up Cyprus for certain reasons to be governed by this very style of officer; and since that, coins have been found bearing this very title which is here used by Luke, and these coins were struck in the reign of Claudius, when Paul visited the island.—*Jacobus*. **Sergius Paulus**—Nothing more is known of him than is related in this lesson. **A prudent man** [Rev. Ver., *a man of understanding*.]—The adjective describes what we should call general intelligence and discernment, as in Matt. 11, 25; Luke 10, 21; 1 Cor. 1, 19. It was shown in this instance in his at once recognizing the higher type of character presented by the apostles, and desiring to know more of the "word" which they spake to him as a message from God.—*E. H. Plumptre*. **Who called for Barnabas and Saul**—He sent to the apostles to come to his court for this purpose; similar experiences are recorded by modern missionaries in foreign lands. The report of the preaching at the synagogue had probably

reached him, and aroused his curiosity, if not his spiritual interest.—*L. Abbott*.

8. **Elymas**—A Grecized form of the Arabia for *wise man* which the Magian had assumed.—*Canon Cook*. **Withstood them**—Truth and falsehood were brought into visible conflict with each other. It is evident from the graphic character of the narrative, the description of Paul "setting his eyes" on the sorcerer, "the mist and darkness" which fell on Bar-jesus, the "groping about for some one to lead him," that the opposing wonder-workers stood face to face in the presence of the proconsul, as Moses and Aaron withstood the magicians at the Egyptian court, Sergius Paulus being in this respect different from Pharaoh, that he did not "harden his heart."—*Conybeare and Howson*. **Seeking to turn** [Rev. Ver., *Turn aside*.]—His victim was emancipating himself from his bondage, and was passing from credulity to faith and that progress Bar-jesus sought to check.—*E. H. Plumptre*. **From the faith**—May either mean from the Christian faith, the new religion which these strangers preached, or from the *act* of faith, that is, believing the new doctrine thus made known to him.—*J. A. Alexander*.

Men who occupy high positions are always attended by persons who desire to turn them aside from the path of duty and suggest evil designs; they are not always warned and protected by apostles; compare 1 Sam. 10, 1-8.—*Quesnel*.

9. **Saul . . . also called Paul**—Eight reasons for the change of Saul into Paul: (1) Because Saul was a purely Jewish name. (2) Because among the Greeks it might expose him to contempt, as having the same sound as *saulos*, "wanton." (3) To indicate his change and call to a new life from a Jew to a Christian, from a persecutor to a preacher of the Gospel. (4) But in the change much of the original name was left, and commemorated what he had been. The fire of zeal of Saul still glowed in the heart of Paul, but its flame was purified by the Holy Ghost. (5) His

Authorized Version.

“Paul,) filled with the Holy Ghost set his eyes on him,

10 And said, O full of all subtilty and all mischief, ⁹ thou child of the devil, thou enemy of all righteousness, wilt thou not cease to pervert the right ways of the Lord?

11 And now, behold, ¹⁰ the hand of the Lord is upon thee, and thou shalt be blind, not seeing for a season. And immediately there fell on him a mist and darkness; and he went about seeking some to lead him by the hand.

c That is, Worker.—⁹ Matt. 13. 35; John 8. 44; 1 John 3. 8.—
¹⁰ Exod. 9. 3; 2 Kings 6. 18.

new name denoted also his mission to the Gentiles, the Romans being familiar with the name Paulus. (6) It was a token of humility, Paulus—*parvulus*. 1 Cor. 15. 9. (7) It commemorated the cognomen of Paul's first (?) convert, Sergius Paulus, and was a good augury of his future success in the Roman world. (8) It indicates Paul's intended supremacy in the Roman or Western Church as distinct from the Aramaic name Cephas, and the Greek name Peter.—

Wordsworth. The most probable opinion is, that Paul, as a Hellenistic Jew and a Roman citizen, had two names, Saul being his Jewish name and Paul his Roman. Hitherto his labors had been chiefly confined to the Jews, and hence Luke retained the name by which he was best known among them; but now he addresses himself to the Gentiles, and henceforth Luke mentions him only by his Gentile name.—*P. J. Gloag*. Filled with the Holy Ghost—The tense of the Greek participle implies a sudden access of spiritual power, showing itself at once in insight into character, righteous indignation and prevision of the divine chastisement.—*E. H. Plumptre*. Set his eyes on him—A less convinced or a less courageous man might well have shrunk from individual collision with a personage who evidently occupied a position of high consideration in the immediate household of the noble Roman. But to a spirit like Paul's, while there could be infinite compassion for ignorance, infinite sympathy with infirmity, infinite tenderness toward penitence, there could, on the other hand, be no compromise with imposture, no tolerance for cupidity, no truce with Canaan.—*Farrar*.

10. Full of all subtilty [Rev. Ver., *guile*.]—“Subtily” denotes deceit and fraud, and implies that he was practicing an imposition, and that he knew it.—*Barnes*. And all mischief

Revised Version.

the Holy Ghost, fastened his eyes on

10 him, and said, O full of all guile and all villany, thou son of the devil, thou enemy of all righteousness, wilt thou not cease to pervert the right

11 ways of the Lord? And now, behold, the hand of the Lord is upon thee, and thou shalt be blind, not seeing the sun ³ for a season. And immediately there fell on him a mist and a

12 darkness; and he went about seeking some to lead him by the hand. Then

² Or, until.

[Rev. Ver., *Villany*.] The Greek of the second noun is found here only in the New Testament. Its primary meaning expresses simply “ease in working;” but this passed through the several stages of “versatility,” “shiftiness,” and “trickery.” A kindred word is translated in chap. 18. 14 as “wicked lewdness.”—*E. H. Plumptre*. Child of the devil—So called as being under his influence. Enemy of all righteousness—It refers to the ceaseless opposition of Elymas to righteousness and truth in general; not merely to his endeavor to prevent Sergius Paulus from seeking salvation through Christ. The right ways of the Lord—The straight ways of the Lord are God's straight course in Jesus, saving the world through him. These straight ways Elymas distorted, made crooked, by his sophistical misconstructions and perversions.—*Whedon*.

11. The hand of the Lord—Paul here spoke not with personal anger, but as the instrument of the divine will. Thou shalt be blind—There was a moral fitness in blindness as the penalty of sin the very essence of which was that the man was fighting against light.—*E. H. Plumptre*. For a season—Mercy in judgment. Proof that the apostles spake not in personal resentment. Perhaps it intimated that, like Saul himself, the sorcerer should find his blindness of body result in light both to soul and body.—*Whedon*. A mist and a darkness—Blindness commenced at once, but increased gradually, first came a cloudy mist, in which things were distinctly seen, then the total eclipse.—*F. N. Peloubet*. Seeking some to lead—Elymas, who had selfishly used his knowledge to guide others, to his own advantage, now had to seek for others to guide his own steps. The tense of the Greek verb (*he was seeking*) seems to imply that he sought and did not find. He

Authorized Version.

12 Then the deputy, when he saw what was done, believed, being astonished at the doctrine of the Lord.

had no friends to help him, and was led to his fate unpitied.—*E. H. Plumptre.*

12. The deputy [Rev. Ver., *Proconsul*] believed.—That he was spiritually converted is not certain, for precisely the same language is used of Simon Magus. Chap. 8. 13. He was convinced by this miracle of the powers of the Lord Jesus, whose ambassadors Paul and Barnabas were; that he gave his personal allegiance to Christ does not necessarily follow; it is not stated that he was baptized, and the implication that astonishment was the basis of his belief does not favor the hypothesis that he became a true child of God.—*L. Abbott.* But we cannot doubt that when the proconsul believed his influence would make Christianity reputable, and that from this moment the Gentiles of the island, as well as the Jews, had the news of salvation brought home to them.—*Conybeare and Howson.* **Being astonished**—Felix trembled and returned to his sin; Sergius trembled and cleaved to Christ. One is taken and another left.—*W. Arnot.* **At the doctrine** [Rev. Ver., *teaching*] **of the Lord**—*The teaching which had the Lord, that is, the Lord Jesus, as its main theme.*—*E. H. Plumptre.*

Authorities to be Consulted.

Smith's New Testament History, 436. Conybeare and Howson's St. Paul, chap. v. Schaft's History of the Apostolic Church, 241. Farrar's St. Paul, chap. 18. Biblical Studies (Prof. Plumptre,) 376. Guthrie's Sunday Magazine, i, 781. Freeman's Bible Manners and Customs, 630, 636. Foster's Cyclopedia of Illustrations, ver. 2: 6125; ver. 9: 9554.

Root Thoughts.

Earnest and devout souls uniting in true consecration to Christ make centers of spiritual forces out of which Christian service in its varied forms evolves.

Souls that reach out toward God through Christ receive God's response in the gift of his Spirit. Possessing his Spirit men reach out toward men. They who look most eagerly to heaven care most for the regions beyond their own standpoint. From Antioch the saint looks

Revised Version.

the proconsul, when he saw what was done, believed, being astonished at the teaching of the Lord.

to heaven, and then with heavenly impulses and enthusiasms toward Seleucia, Salamis, Pamphylia, Europe—the world.

All things do not, cannot, go smoothly with those who go out on God's embassies into this world. Their own preparation demands struggle. Out of struggle comes strength. The increase of their strength only increases the venom and violence of the adversaries. They must encounter false prophets and false doctrines. Great commercial, social, and religious interests will in one way or another antagonize the teachers of God's truth. This is to be expected, for this the Church must prepare.

God's truth is severe. It drops in mercy for penitence, in tenderness for contrition, but with lightning fierceness on the impenitent and the persecuting.

God's light is darkness to God's enemy, a savor of death unto death. The hand of the Lord that laid hold of Saul and Barnabas smote Elymas and made him blind.

Practical Thoughts.

[THE MISSIONARY WORK.]

1. The impulse to missionary work begins in a living Church where the gifts of the Spirit are abundant, and where workers are earnest. Ver. 1.
2. The call to missionary work proceeds from the Spirit of God to the conscience of the Church. Ver. 2.
3. The workers for the mission field are divinely chosen and indicated. Ver. 2.
4. God calls to the missionary work not the least but the greatest of his followers.
5. The workers in the cause of missions need not only the call of God but the sanction and appointment of the Church. Ver. 3.
6. The work of missions begins among those that have some knowledge of God, though perverted, and from them extend to those who are ignorant of God. Ver. 5.
7. The workers in the mission field find Satan active to thwart when God begins to save men. Vers. 6-8.
8. Workers for God are endowed with power to speak in God's name in rebuke of sin, and should speak out boldly. Ver. 10.

A. D. 46.]

LESSON X.

[June 3.

AT ANTIOCH.—Acts 13. 13-16 and 43-52.

GOLDEN TEXT.—And the word of the Lord was published throughout all the region.—
ACTS 13. 49.

TIME.—A. D. 46, immediately succeeding the last lesson.

PLACE.—Antioch in Pisidia.

INTRODUCTION.—Paul's course was now directed to the region which adjoined the scene of his former labors in Cilicia, and which gave the readiest access to the districts beyond the Taurus—Pisidia and Lycaonia—which abounded with Jewish synagogues. The passage of that mountain chain, long regarded as one of the great lines of demarkation between the Greco-Roman and Oriental worlds, marks the epoch at which the Gospel overpassed the limits of Semitic civilization. These events at Antioch are evidently related thus fully in the Acts as a leading example of the way in which the Gospel was rejected by the Jews and received by the Gentiles in many other cities, and the discourse of Paul furnishes one type, as that at Athens gives another, of his mode of addressing audiences of various kinds.—
W. Smith.

Authorized Version.

13 Now when Paul and his company loosed from Pa'phos, they came to Per'ga in Pam-phy'l'i-a: and John¹ departing from them returned to Je-ru'sa-lem.

1 Chap. 15. 38.

Revised Version.

13 Now Paul and his company set sail from Pa'phos, and came to Per'ga in Pam-phy'l'i-a: and John departed from them and returned to Je-ru'sa-

13. Paul and his company—From this time Paul is not only the chief speaker, (chap. 14. 12,) but the leader; Barnabas occupies a secondary, if not a subordinate, position.—*L. Abbott.* Loosed from Paphos—Trace their course from Paphos, cutting the Mediterranean with their keel in what would now be considered a light row-boat with sail super-



added, in a slant line north-westward into the gulf, and up to the continental shore of Pamphylia in Asia Minor.—*Whedon.* They came to Per'ga—Whether they chose Perge as their destination, in accordance with any preconceived plan, or whether it was a part of "God's unseen providence, by men nicknamed chance," we do not know. It was not easy for an ancient traveler to go exactly in what direction he liked, and he was obliged, in the circumscribed navigation of those days, to be guided in his movements by the accident of finding vessels which were bound for particular ports.—*Farrar.* Perge—An ancient and important city of Pamphylia, situated on the River Cestrus, at a distance of eight or ten miles from its mouth, and celebrated in antiquity for the worship of Artemis, (Diana,) whose temple stood

on a hill outside the town. The goddess and the temple are represented in the coins of Perge. The Cestrus was formerly navigable to Perge. The modern traveler finds here only the encampments of shepherds, who pasture their cattle amid walls and towers, columns and cornices, a theater, a broken aqueduct incrustured with the calcareous deposit of the Pamphylian streams, and tombs scattered on both sides of the town.—*L. Abbott.* Pamphylia—One of the southern provinces of Asia Minor. As in the case of most other provinces of Lesser Asia, the boundaries of Pamphylia were frequently changed, but it may be roughly said to have been separated from Pisidia by the Taurian range.—*L. Abbott.* John [John Mark, see on Lessons VIII, verse 12, and IX, verse 5] departing—It is but too easy to conjecture the mixed motives by which Mark was actuated. He was young. The novelty of the work had worn off. Its hardships, even under the favorable circumstances in Cyprus, had not been slight. His mother was at Jerusalem, perhaps alone, perhaps exposed to persecution. It may be, too, that the young man saw and resented the growing ascendancy of Paul over his cousin Barnabas. And besides all this, Mark, bred up in the very bosom of the Church at Jerusalem, may have felt serious misgivings about the tendency of that liberal theology, that broad universalism of proffered admission into the Church,

Authorized Version.

14 But when they departed from Per'ga, they came to An'ti-och in Pi-sid'i-a, and went into the synagogue on the sabbath day, and sat down.

15 And ²after the reading of the Law and the Prophets, the rulers of the synagogue sent unto them, saying, *Ye men and brethren*, if ye ³have any word of exhortation for the people, say on.

16 Then Paul stood up, and beckoning with *his* hand, said, Men of Is'ra-el, and ye that fear God, give audience.

Revised Version.

14 lem. But they, passing through from Per'ga, came to An'ti-och in Pi-sid'i-a; and they went into the synagogue on the sabbath day, and sat

15 down. And after the reading of the law and the prophets the rulers of the synagogue sent unto them, saying, Brethren, if ye have any word of exhortation for the people, say on.

16 And Paul stood up, and beckoning with the hand said, Men of Israel, and ye that fear God, hearken.

²Luke 4. 16.—³Heb. 13. 22.

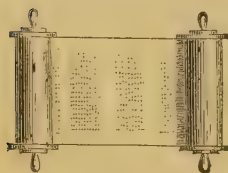
which seemed to throw into the background the immemorial sanctity, not only of the oral but even of the written law.—*Farrar*.

14. When they departed from Perga [Rev. Ver., *But they passing through from Perga*.]—The words indicate a short stay and a rapid journey. The theory of Howson is, that this present rapidity of movement arose from the nature of the seasons in this region. If we may suppose that Paul left Seleucia in early March, and spent two months in Cyprus, he would be at Perga in early May. At this time the lowlanders of Pamphylia are marching in caravans of the entire population for the cool recesses of the northern highlands; Paul would avail himself of this tide, and press into the interior. **Antioch in Pisidia**—This city, which bears its addendum, *in Pisidia*, to distinguish it from the greater Antioch whence Paul started, was built by the same Seleucus. It stood on the great highway leading from Ephesus on the west to Iconium, and thence to the Syrian gates, the narrow pass by which entrance was made into Syria. By this thoroughfare armies, caravans, and travel of every description have passed, as a natural route, for centuries.—*Whedon*. **On the Sabbath-day**—The Jewish sabbath, Saturday. **Sat down**—Not, as some think, in a seat of dignity as prepared to teach, but quietly in the congregation.—*Whedon*.

15. After the reading—The reading of the Scripture formed an important part of the synagogue services. Ver. 27. They were arranged in lessons, somewhat as in the Episcopal Church of to-day, one selection being taken from the

prophets, which included the books of Joshua, Judges, Samuel, and Kings.—*L. Abbott*. We are enabled by two curious coincidences to fix, with very little uncertainty, the precise Sabbath on which the mission work at Antioch opened. The opening words of Paul refer to Deut. 1. 31, and this was the lesson for the forty-fourth Sabbath in the year, which fell in July or August; the corresponding second lesson from the prophets being Isa. 1. 1-27, from which he also quotes. He starts, as was natural, from what the people had just been listening to, as the text of his discourse.—*E. H. Plumptre*. **The rulers of the synagogue**—The synagogue was governed by a board of elders. The term *ruler* is usually applied to the president of this board, but here, and in Mark 5. 22, it appears to be equivalent to elders. Perhaps the president or ruler invited Paul to speak after consulting with the other elders.—*L. Abbott*. **Sent unto them**—It was customary to allow in the synagogue service any rabbi to expound the Scripture, and to make it the occasion for explaining the tenets of any new sect or school of Judaism.—*L. Abbott*. **Word of exhortation**—Or, consolation. For with Israel, in her history of sorrows, consolation and exhortation were the same word. And by that same word, *consolation of Israel*, (Luke 2. 25,) was the Messiah designated. When Paul, therefore, unfolded the Messiah to their view, he very suitably responded to their courteous, we might almost say Christian, invitation.—*Whedon*.

16. Stood up—In conformity with Greek usage. In Judea the teacher sat. Luke 4. 20.—*Canon Cook*. **Beckoning with his hand**—The graphic touch of description would seem to indicate, as does the full report of the speech that they came in the first instance from one who had been present.—*E. H. Plumptre*. **Ye that fear God**—Gentiles who conscientiously



Ancient Roll.

law, the first five books, the other from the

Authorized Version.

43 Now when the congregation was broken up, many of the Jews and religious proselytes followed Paul and Barnabas: who, speaking to them, persuaded them to continue in ⁴the grace of God.

44 And the next sabbath day came almost the whole city together to hear the word of God.

45 But when the Jews saw the multitudes, they were filled with envy, and ⁵spake against those things which were

⁴ Chap. 11, 23; Luke 1, 32; Titus 2, 11; Heb. 12, 15; 1 Pet. 5, 12.
—⁵ Chap. 18, 6; 1 Pet. 4, 4; Jude 10.

adore the only true God. He thus addresses both classes of men, the men of Israel and the Gentile proselytes, and all conscientious believers in monotheism.—*Whedon*. **Give audience** [Rev. Ver., *hearken*.]—Literally, *hearye*. The English phrase may be noted as an example of the use of the word “audience,” which has since been applied to the persons who hear, in the old abstract sense of the act of hearing.—*E. H. Plumptre*.

Outline of Paul's discourse. Verses 17-42.—He first wins the attention of the Jews, by referring to the glories of their nation and the promises of the Messiah; he traces their history to David, from whose posterity the Messiah should spring; he asserts that Jesus is that Messiah rejected by the Jews in Jerusalem. He is now preached to them; in him the prophecies are fulfilled; God has raised him from the dead and has thus declared him to be the Messiah in accordance with the voices of the prophets; forgiveness is proclaimed to all who believe on him, a forgiveness which the law is unable to procure, but those who reject this salvation must beware lest they should expose themselves to the judgments of God.—*P. J. Gloag*.

43. When the congregation was broken up [Rev. Ver., *When the synagogue broke up*.]—The participle implies that they stopped, as they passed out, to request the apostle to resume his teaching on the following Sabbath.—*E. H. Plumptre*. **Religious proselytes**—Literally, *the worshipping strangers*; here the Greeks who accepted Jehovah as their God, and worshiped with the Jews.—*L. Abbott*. **Followed Paul and Barnabas**—For further conversation and enlightenment. **Persuaded them** [Rev. Ver., *Urged them*] **to continue**—Yet with all their pleasure and their hope [in view of the interest manifested] their knowledge of man's heart must have taught them not to be over-confident, and, therefore, they would ear-

Revised Version.

43 Now when the synagogue broke up, many of the Jews and of the devout proselytes followed Paul and Barnabas: who, speaking to them, urged them to continue in the grace of God.

44 And the next sabbath almost the whole city was gathered together to

45 hear the word of ¹God. But when the Jews saw the multitudes, they were filled with jealousy, and contra-

¹ Many ancient authorities read *the Lord*.

nestly urge them to continue in the grace of God; to keep up the impression which had already outlasted their stay within the synagogue; to feed it, and keep it alive and make it deeper and deeper, that it should remain with them forever.—*T. K. Arnold*. **In the grace of God**—The burden of the apostolic preaching was that they should accept salvation as a free gift, and rest on the free grace of God, not on their own obedience to the law.—*L. Abbott*.

Such to whom the word of God is savory and sweet are not soon cloyed with it, but hunger after it. Neither do they loathe the heavenly manna because it is rained down frequently about their tents.—*Burkitt*.

44. On the next Sabbath—During the week Paul and Barnabas would be engaged in teaching the people, and in consequence of this, the report of the new doctrine would be spread throughout the whole city, and all would be anxious to hear it. **Almost the whole city**—Not only the Jews, the proselytes, and the devout Gentiles, but the heathen inhabitants of Pisidian Antioch, flocked into the synagogue.—*P. J. Gloag*.

45. When the Jews saw the multitudes—Their spiritual pride and exclusive bigotry was immediately roused. They could not endure the notion of others being freely admitted to the same religious privileges with themselves. This was always the sin of the Jewish people. Instead of realizing their position in the world as the prophetic nation for the good of the whole earth, they indulged the self-exalting opinion that God's highest blessings were only for themselves.—*J. S. Howson*. **Filled with envy** [Rev. Ver., *With jealousy*.]—With indignation at seeing these two itinerant Nazarenes taking possession of their synagogue, and filling it with the city population.—*Whedon*. **Those things . . . spoken by Paul**—They heard the apostles

Authorized Version.

spoken by Paul, contradicting and blaspheming.

46 Then Paul and Bar'na-bas waxed bold, and said, ⁶It was necessary that the word of God should first have been spoken to you: but ⁷seeing ye put it from you, and judge yourselves unworthy of everlasting life, lo, we turn to the Gen'tiles.

47 For so hath the Lord commanded us, *saying*, ⁸I have set thee to be a light of the Gen'tiles, that thou shouldest be for salvation unto the ends of the earth.

48 And when the Gentiles heard this, they were glad, and glorified the word of the Lord: ⁹and as many as were ordained to eternal life believed.

49 And the word of the Lord was published throughout all the region.

⁶ Matt. 10. 6; chap. 3. 26; Rom. 1. 16.—⁷ Exod. 32. 10; Deut. 32. 21; Isa. 55. 5; Matt. 21. 43; Rom. 10. 19.—⁸ Isa. 42. 6; 49. 6.—⁹ Chap. 2. 47; 2 Tim. 2. 19.

speaking to the multitudes, not in the condescending, supercilious tone of those who could just tolerate a wealthy proselyte of the gate that could purchase their favor, but as finding in every one of them a brother standing on the same level as themselves, as redeemed by Christ, and this practical repudiation of all the exclusive privileges on which they prided themselves was more than they could bear.—*E. H. Plumptre.* **And blaspheming**—Not only opposing by argument, but also by sneers and denunciation and evil speaking. To *blaspheme* is here, not to take God's name in vain, but to speak evil and slanderous words.—*L. Abbott.*

46. **Waxed bold** [Rev. Ver., *Spake out boldly*.]—It was necessary, because it was the divine purpose that the Jews should have the opportunity to accept and become themselves the bearers to others of the Gospel.—*L. Abbott.* **Ye put it from you** [Rev. Ver., *Thrust it from you*.]—Thrust away, disdainingly to embrace the overture of everlasting life.—*Barrow.* **Judge yourselves unworthy**—There is touch of righteous indignation, perhaps something like irony, in the words.—*E. H. Plumptre.* Not that they literally believed themselves to be unworthy of life eternal. On the contrary, they believed themselves eminently and even exclusively the heirs of that inheritance. But they determined themselves to be such sort as truly is unworthy eternal life.—*Whedon.* **Everlasting life**—Eternal life is not solely a future,

Revised Version.

dicted the things which were spoken by Paul, and ²blasphemed. And Paul and Bar'na-bas spake out boldly, and said, It was necessary that the word of God should first be spoken to you. Seeing ye thrust it from you, and judge yourselves unworthy of eternal life, lo, we turn to the Gentiles.

47 For so hath the Lord commanded us, *saying*,

I have set thee for a light of the Gentiles,

That thou shouldest be for salvation unto the uttermost part of the earth.

48 And as the Gentiles heard this, they were glad, and glorified the word of ³God: and as many as were ordained

49 to eternal life believed. And the word of the Lord was spread abroad 50 throughout all the region. But the

² Or, *railed*.—³ Many ancient authorities read *the Lord*.

but a present, possession. It is a possession commenced in this life to be perpetuated in a life to come. There is a present as well as a future salvation.—*Whedon.* **We turn to the Gentiles**—It was here that the first formal declaration was made that the offer of salvation, rejected by the Jews, was handed over to the Gentiles; and here, too, was first proclaimed the great Pauline doctrine, in which is summed up the essence of Christianity as a saving faith.—*W. Smith.*

Observe that as every soul by its memory keeps the record of its own life (Luke 16. 25) so every soul utters its own condemnation. We are daily judging ourselves unworthy of divine grace in every act of refusal to accept and rely upon it.—*L. Abbott.*

47. Paul and Barnabas do not assert their determination never again to preach the Gospel to the Jews, and henceforth to confine themselves to the Gentiles, but they address themselves solely to the Jews of Pisidian Antioch.—*P. J. Gloag.* **So hath the Lord commanded**—When God promises light to the Gentiles, Christians understand the word as an order to themselves to spread the light in the dark places of the earth. When God proclaims that the thing shall be done, true disciples of Christ go forth to do it. They count the promise a command, and render themselves instruments of righteousness unto God.—*W. Arnot.* **A light of the Gentiles**—Paul here quotes Isa. 49. 6. What

Authorized Version.

50 But the Jews stirred up the devout and honorable women, and the chief men of the city, and raised ¹⁰ persecution against Paul and Bar'na-bas, and expelled them out of their coasts.

¹⁰ 1 Thess. 2. 14-16; 2 Tim. 3. 11.

Isaiah there says in a diluted sense of himself the apostles here apply in its fullness to Christ. Having complained of his rejection by his own countrymen, the prophet is assured by God that to gain the Jews were a small thing, for he is beautifully told that he should be a *light of the Gentiles, a salvation to the ends of the earth.*—Whedon.

50. They were glad.—Not all the Gentiles; but as it was characteristic of the Jews that they contradicted and blasphemed the Gospel, so it was characteristic of the Gentiles that they rejoiced in and honored it.—*L. Abbott.* **The word of the Lord** [Rev. Ver., *of God.*].—The "word of the Lord" here, is the teaching which had the Lord Jesus as its subject.—*E. H. Plumptre.* **Ordained to eternal life.**—The Greek word does not imply more than that they fell in with the divine order which the Jews rejected. They were as soldiers who take the place assigned to them in God's great army.—*E. H. Plumptre.* By whom so disposed is not here declared; nor need the word be in this place further particularized. We know that it is God who worketh in us the will to believe, and that the preparation of the heart is of him; but to find in this text preordination to life asserted, is to force both the word and the context to a meaning which they do not contain.—*Alford.* **Was published** [Rev. Ver., *spread*] **throughout all the region**—Not by the apostles, for the history goes on with the record of their personal labors, but by the private ministry of the new disciples, as in chap. 8. 14; 11. 19.—*L. Abbott.* It was not in Antioch only, but in the "region" round about the border district of the three provinces of Phrygia, Lycaonia, and Galatia that the new faith was planted. Each town and village in that region presented the spectacle of at least some few men and women who no longer sacrificed to their country's gods, who were no longer content even to worship in the synagogue of the Jews, but met in small companies here and there, as the disciples of a new Master.—*E. H. Plumptre.* **The Jews stirred up** [Rev. Ver., *Urged on.*].—The Jewish proselytes, among whom were many women of distinction and the chief men

Revised Version.

Jews urged on the devout women of honourable estate, and the chief men of the city, and stirred up a persecution against Paul and Bar'na-bas, and cast them out of their borders.

of the city, seem to have grudged the admission of the Gentiles except by the same gate; and they were easily stirred up to drive Paul and Barnabas out of their bounds.—*W. Smith.* **The devout and honorable women** [Rev. Ver., *The devout women of honorable estate.*].—*Honorable* refers to social position, not to personal character. Women exerted a strong influence both for and against Christianity.—*L. Abbott.* These *honorable women* were probably wives of the **chief men of the city**, and used their influence with their husbands against the preachers of the new doctrine. It is a curious corroboration of this narrative that Strabo, the Greek geographer, speaking of this district, says, "All agree that the women are prime leaders in superstition, and these appeal to the men in favor of large reverence of the gods, and feasts, and worships."—*Whedon.* **Raised** [Rev. Ver., *Stirred up a*] **persecution**—In these foreign countries it is not the cross of Nazareth that is most immediately repulsive to the Jews: it is the wound given to Jewish importance in the association of Gentiles with Jews as the receivers of the good tidings. If the Gentiles had been asked to become Jews no offense would have been taken.—*W. Smith.* **Against Paul and Barnabas**—It lies in the nature of the case that they were not the only sufferers. From the first the Christians of Antioch in Pisidia had to learn the lesson that they must "through much tribulation enter into the kingdom of God." Chap. 14. 22. The memory of these sufferings came back upon Paul's mind, even in the last months of his life, as something never to be forgotten. 2 Tim. 3. 11.—*E. H. Plumptre.* **Expelled them out of their coasts** [Rev. Ver., *Cast them out of their borders.*].—As Pisidian Antioch was a Roman colony, it is improbable that any legal proceedings were taken against Paul and Barnabas which ended in their banishment. There seems merely to have been a tumult excited; the place was made too hot for them, and for the sake of peace they felt constrained to retire. We find them revisiting Antioch, (Acts 14. 21.) which they could not have done had there been a legal expulsion.—*P. J. Gloag.*

Authorized Version.

51 But ¹¹they shook off the dust of their feet against them, and came unto I-co'ni-um.

52 And the disciples ¹²were filled with joy, and with the Holy Ghost.

¹¹ Luke 9. 5.—¹² Matt. 5. 12; John 16. 22; chap. 2. 46; 1 Pet. 1. 8.

51. Shook off the dust—Such was the custom of stricter Jews in departing from a heathen city. But henceforth the rejecters of Jesus, though Jews by blood, are heathen in heart. The meaning of the symbol of shaking the dust from your feet is solemn and striking. It declares the city polluted, and not a particle of it shall adhere to the apostle's person. It is given over to itself, and consigned to its own destruction.—*Whedon*. Came to Iconium—A considerable city of



of communication between Ephesus and the more eastern cities of Tarsus and Antioch, and the Euphrates. Under the Byzantine emperors it was the metropolis of Lycaonia, was subsequently captured by the Turks, and made the capital of an empire whose sovereigns took the title of Sultans of Iconium. During this period of its history it acquired its greatest celebrity. It is now called Koniye, has a population variously estimated from twenty to thirty thousand.—*I. Abbott*.

52. Disciples—Luke does not adopt the name *Christians* himself, but still retains the usual epithet, *disciples*.—*Whedon*. Filled with joy—It might have been expected that they would leave gloom and despondency among their discouraged converts; but it was not so. They left behind them the joy of a new hope, the inspiration of a new faith, the outpouring of the Holy Spirit in the hearts of those who had learned of the heavenly promise.—*Farrar*. And with the Holy Ghost—And this was the source of their joy, their strength, and their firmness. Great is the power of Christian joy. A religion of gloom, of asceticism, of self-accusation may be sincere and solid, but it wants the abounding strength, the rich consolation, the glorious attractiveness of a religion of joy, especially if it be the joy of those filled with the Holy Ghost.—*Whedon*.

Revised Version.

51 But they shook off the dust of their feet against them, and came unto
52 I-co'ni-um. And the disciples were filled with joy and with the Holy Ghost.

Authorities to be Consulted.

Smith's New Testament History, 440. Milman's History of Christianity, 390. Conybeare and Howson's St. Paul, chap. vi. Farrar's St. Paul, chap. xx. Schaft's Apostolic Church, 242. Arnot's Church in the House, 292. John Fletcher's Works, iii, 236. H. Bonar's Bible Thoughts and Themes, iii, 153. Freeman's Bible Manners and Customs, Nos. 636, 834, 854. Foster's Cyclopaedia of Illustrations, 4408, 9554.

Root Thoughts.

Sabbath days under the Law became gospel opportunities under the Gospel. The habit of the synagogue, the open word, the silence of the Sabbath, the privilege of speech—all are open doors when God's ambassadors come to a prepared people with God's good news.

The ready messenger is as important as the open door. The Jewish system had prepared the way for the gospel teachers. So Saul and Barnabas come with the old and new facts, with new interpretations of the Old Scriptures, to put new meanings and new ministries into these old sabbaths. Blessed preparation. Blessed provision.

However devoted these old worshipers may be to their old forms, they are not by that devotion prepared to examine the deepest realities of the religion which they held in form.

The new life stirs up the old, and excites bitter antagonism.

The Gospel is taken first to the Jews, in harmony with the divine order, and then to the Gentiles. Persecution, assault, separation, physical pain, but with it all there comes joy, for the Lord is with his people.

Practical Thoughts.

[THE WORD OF THE LORD.]

1. The word of the Lord is proclaimed and goes on its way, though some workers fail in their duty and turn back. Ver. 13.

2. The word of the Lord in preaching is based upon and supported by the word of the Lord in the Scriptures. Ver. 15.

3. The word of the Lord preached in sincerity has a power to win attention, and attracts the hearts of its hearers. Vers. 43, 44.

4. The word of the Lord may stir up the evil in some men, while it calls forth the good in others. Ver. 45.

5. The word of the Lord requires the willing hearer as well as the faithful preacher. Ver. 46.

6. The word of the Lord tests every man's

heart who hears it and reveals the worthy and the unworthy. Ver. 46.

7. The word of the Lord bringing light to men is a call to bear the light to men. Ver. 47.

8. The word of the Lord brings gladness to those who receive it, notwithstanding the opposition of its enemies. Vers. 48, 49.

9. The word of the Lord, rejected by the unworthy, is taken from them and given to others. Ver. 50.

A. D. 46.]

LESSON XI.

[June 10.]

AT ICONIUM AND LYSTRA.—Acts 14. 1-18.

GOLDEN TEXT.—Speaking boldly in the Lord.—ACTS 14. 3.

TIME.—A. D. 46, immediately succeeding the last lesson.

PLACES.—Iconium and Lystra, in Asia Minor.

INTRODUCTION.—We are here brought in contact with a totally new subject—with heathen superstition and mythology, yet not the superstition of an educated mind, as that of Sergius Paulus, nor the mythology of a refined and cultivated taste, like that of the Athenians, but the mythology and superstition of a rude and unsophisticated people. Thus does the Gospel, in the person of Paul, successively clash with opposing powers, with sorcerers and philosophers, cruel magistrates and false divinities. Now it is the rabbinical master of the synagogue, now the listening proselyte from the Greeks, that is resisted or convinced, now the honest inquiry of a Roman officer, now the wild fanaticism of a rustic credulity, that is addressed with bold and persuasive eloquence.—*Conybeare and Howson*.

Authorized Version.

Revised Version.

1 And it came to pass in I-co'ni-um, that they went both together into the synagogue of the Jews, and so spake, that a great multitude both of the Jews and also of the Greeks believed.

2 But the unbelieving Jews stirred up

14 And it came to pass in I-co'ni-um, that they entered together into the synagogue of the Jews, and so spake, that a great multitude both of Jews and Greeks believed. But the Jews that were disobedient stirred up the

1 Isa. 11. 11.

1. In Iconium [See note, Lesson X, verse 51.]—There is no reason to suppose that its character was different from that of the other important towns on the principal lines of communication through Asia Minor. The elements of its population would be as follows: A large number of trifling and frivolous Greeks, whose principal places of resort would be the theater and the market-place; some remains of a still older population, coming in occasionally from the country, or residing in a separate quarter of the town; some few Roman officials, civil or military, holding themselves proudly aloof from the inhabitants of the subjugated province; and an old-established colony of Jews, who exercised their trade during the week, and met on the Sabbath to read the law in the synagogue.—*J. S. Howson*. They went . . . into the synagogue—The persecution which Paul and

Barnabas suffered in Antioch, effected simply a change of place, not of purpose. The same work which they commenced in that city, they resume in Iconium. The sentiments and the labors which occasioned them so much suffering in Antioch continue to be precisely the same.—*Brandt*. Also of the Greeks—The latter term is used in its wider sense, as in Mark 7. 26 and elsewhere, as equivalent to Gentile, but it implies that those who were so described spoke and understood Greek. In the former instance these would probably be the "proselytes of the gate," who heard the apostles in the synagogue.—*E. H. Plumptre*. Believed—Became disciples of Jesus, accepting him as their Saviour.

2. The unbelieving Jews [Rev. Ver., *The Jews that were disobedient*.]—They were especially grieved that their peculiar privileges, as the special people of God, should be attacked,

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the Gen'tiles, and made their minds evil affected against the brethren.

3 Long time therefore abode they speaking boldly in the Lord, which gave testimony unto the word of his grace, and granted signs and wonders to be done by their hands.

4 But the multitude of the city was divided: and part held with the Jews, and part with the apostles.

5 And when there was an assault made both of the Gen'tiles, and also of the

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souls of the Gen'tiles, and made them evil affected against the brethren.

3 Long time therefore they tarried *there* speaking boldly in the Lord, which bare witness unto the word of his grace, granting signs and wonders to be done

4 by their hands. But the multitude of the city was divided; and part held with the Jews, and part with the 5 apostles. And when there was made an onset both of the Gen'tiles and of

² Mark 16. 20; Rom. 15. 19; 1 Cor. 2. 4; Heb. 2. 4.

and that the Gentiles should be admitted to equal privileges, and hence they looked upon Christianity as antagonistic to Judaism, and were greatly provoked at its success.—*P. J. Gloag. Stirred up the Gentiles* [Rev. Ver., *Stirred up the souls of the Gentiles*.]—See note, Lesson X, ver. 50. It is the distinguishing feature of nearly all the persecutions in the Acts that they originated in the hostility of the Jews.—*E. H. Plumptre. Made their minds* [Rev. Ver., *them*] *evil affected*—When Jewish indignation was kindled, when the synagogue became the weekly scene of furious contentions, it would be easy enough to persuade the Gentile inhabitants of the city that these emissaries, who had already been ejected from Antioch, were dangerous incendiaries, who every-where disturbed the peace of cities.—*Farrar. Against the brethren*—Not only against the two missionaries, but all those whom they had brought to a knowledge of the Lord.

3. Long time . . . abode—This can hardly be understood as involving a stay of less than several months, during which Paul and Barnabas were working for their livelihood.—*E. H. Plumptre. Therefore*—In consequence of the success which Paul and Barnabas had in the conversion of both Jews and Greeks.—*P. J. Gloag. Speaking boldly*—The "boldness" consisted, as the context shows, in a full declaration of the Gospel of the grace of God as contrasted with the narrowing Judaism with which the Greek proselytes had previously been familiar.—*E. H. Plumptre. Gave testimony . . . and granted* [Rev. Ver., *Bear witness unto . . . granting*] *signs and wonders*—It will be noted here also, as so often elsewhere, the miracles that were wrought came as the confirmation of faith, not as its foundation.—*E. H. Plumptre. Miracles* were a proof of a divine commission to the Gentiles; whereas, in reasoning with the

Jews, the appeal was to the prophecies of the Old Testament, as when Peter preached on the day of Pentecost, and when Paul preached to them in the synagogue of Pisidian Antioch.—*P. J. Gloag.*

4. The multitude . . . was divided—Such a split into two factions was a common occurrence on far less important occasions in these cities of Oriental Greeks.—*Alford. Part held with the Jews*—They did not hold to the Jewish belief, but were induced by them to believe that the Christians were a dangerous and evil element in the city. *Part with the apostles*—No numbers are given, but we may fairly assume that the converts were in a minority, and that they belonged, as a rule, to the lower classes, (1 Cor. 1. 26, 27,) and that the chief men and women of the city, as at the Pisidian Antioch, (chap. 13. 50,) were against them.—*E. H. Plumptre.*

When the community is dead in sin, to throw the word of life into the stagnant mass necessarily disturbs it. Although the Redeemer is Prince of Peace, he is not satisfied with the serenity of a dead sea. He casts in a solvent whose nature it is in the first instance to arouse and separate. The peace which he values is the purity which is reached through conflict. People must take sides when the cross of Christ is preached in time, as they must take sides when the throne of Christ is set in eternity.—*W. Arnot.*

5. When there was an assault [Rev. Ver., *onset*.]—Literally, a rushing on, an onset, an assault; and is so rendered by Luther, Calvin, and our English version. This, however, cannot be its meaning here, as any open violence was prevented by the timely flight of the apostles. In a secondary sense, when applied to the mind, it signifies impulse, movement, purpose, strong inclination, (James 3. 4,) and this seems to be its meaning in this passage.—*P. J. Gloag. Of the Gentiles*—The portion of the city who

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Jews with their rulers, to ³use them despitefully, and to stone them,

6 They were ware of it, and ⁴fled unto Lys'tra and Der'be, cities of Lyc-a-o'ni-a, and unto the region that lieth round about:

7 And there they preached the gospel.

8 And ⁵there sat a certain man at Lys'tra, impotent in his feet, being a cripple from his mother's womb, who never had walked:

9 The same heard Paul speak: who

³ 1 Thess. 2, 14-16; 2 Tim. 3, 11.—⁴ Matt. 10, 23.—⁵ Chap. 3, 2.

were of mingled Gentile origin. **Of the Jews with their rulers**—Probably the rulers of the Jewish synagogues, leading the Jews to inflict the Jewish punishment of stoning.—*Whedon*. **To use them despitefully** [Rev. Ver., *shamefully*.]

6. **They were ware** [Rev. Ver., *They became aware*] of it—Showing that the assault was not made, but only intended. **Fled unto Lystra**—A small town about thirty miles south of Iconium. The site of Lystra has never been made out with perfect certainty, but there is good reason to believe that it was at a place now known as Bin Bir Kilisseh, or the Thousand and One Churches, once the see of a bishop, and crowded with the ruins of sacred buildings. It lies in the northern hollows of the huge isolated mass of an extinct volcano, "rising like a giant from a plain level as the sea." It is called the Kara Dag, or Black Mountain, and is still the haunt of dangerous robbers.—*Farrar*. **Derbe**—A small place, near Lystra, but not identified with certainty, though it must have been somewhere in the great Lycaonian plain. **Cities of Lycaonia**—Lycaonia is used rather in an ethnological than in a political sense; it never seems to have been a distinct country.—*P. J. Gloag*. The district of Lycaonia extends from the ridges of Mount Taurus and the borders of Cilicia, on the south, to the Cappadocian hills, on the north. It is a bare and dreary region, unwatered by streams, though in parts liable to occasional inundations. Strabo mentions one place where water was even sold for money.—*J. S. Howson*. **The region . . . round about**—Settled by a rude population, from the ancient races, living mostly in small villages.

7. **There they preached the gospel**—So wild a country was hardly likely to attract Jewish settlers; and there is no trace in Luke's narrative of the existence of a synagogue in

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the Jews with their rulers, to entreat them shamefully, and to stone them, 6 they became aware of it, and fled unto the cities of Ly-ca-o'ni-a, Lys'tra and Der'be, and the region round about:

7 and there they preached the gospel.

8 And at Lys'tra there sat a certain man, impotent in his feet, a cripple from his mother's womb, who never 9 had walked. The same heard Paul speaking: who, fastening his eyes up-

either of the two cities. For the first time, so far as we know, Paul had to begin his work by preaching to the heathen. Even Timothy, the child of a devout Jewish mother, had grown up to manhood uncircumcised. See chap. 16. 3.—*E. H. Plumptre*.

Laodicean preachers compose sermons that, like a prism, make their congregation feel delighted and charmed with the diversified lines and colors of their imagery. Revival ministers make their sermons like a lens to concentrate the rays of truth, and exhibited them with unflinching hand, in near connection with the sinner, till they burn and inflame his heart.—*Dr. Jenkyn*.

8. **There sat a certain man**—No mention is made of any synagogue in Lystra; it is therefore probable that Paul was preaching in the market-place, (see chap. 17. 17,) or in some broad thoroughfare of the city. In a similar manner the missionaries of to-day avail themselves of the squares and public streets as preaching places. The lame man was sitting near by, perhaps brought hither to beg, as the one mentioned in chap. 3, 2.—*L. Abbott*. **A cripple**—The derivation of the word "cripple," Mr. Bloomfield remarks, is suggested by the *old* spelling of the word "creep," one who can only *creep*, and not walk upright.—*Peirce*. **From his mother's womb**—We note, as in chaps. 3, 2; 9, 33, the characteristic care to record the duration of the infirmity which was supernaturally cured.—*E. H. Plumptre*.

9. **The same heard Paul speak** [Rev. Ver., *Heard Paul speaking*.]—The imperfect tense here in the original is important. *He was listening* to Paul's preaching, and, while listening, his countenance, read by the apostle's gift of spiritual discernment, gave token of *faith to be healed*.—*Alford*. He addressed them in Greek, for Greek was well understood in this border country of the Lystrans, though their own dialect was either a barbarous corruption of that

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stedfastly beholding him, and perceiving that he had faith to be healed,

10 Said with a loud voice, 'Stand upright on thy feet. And he leaped and walked.

11 And when the people saw what Paul had done, they lifted up their voices, saying in the speech of Lyc-a-o'-ni-a, 'The gods are come down to us in the likeness of men.

12 And they called Bar'na-bas, Ju'pi-

6 Matt. 8, 10; 9, 28.—7 Isa. 35, 6.—8 Chap. 28, 6.

noble language, or the surviving remainder of some older tongue. He used the language of general civilization, as English may be used now in a Welsh country town like Dolgelly or Carmarthen.—*J. S. Howson.* **Steadfastly beholding him** [Rev. Ver., *Fastening his eyes upon him.*] **Perceiving that he had faith**—It is evident on the face of the narrative that it was not every cripple or every sufferer that Paul would have attempted to heal; it was only such as, so to speak, met half way the exertion of spiritual power by their own ardent faith.—*Farrar.* **To be healed** [Rev. Ver., *To be made whole.*].—The Greek word here signifies not *to be healed*, but *to be saved*, including the whole salvation both of body and soul, the earnest and type of the complete salvation of body and soul in the glorious resurrection.—*Whedon.*

If the apostle looked so steadfastly at the feeble spark of faith in the cripple's heart, how much more distinctly will the all-seeing eye of the Lord observe that spark in us!—*Brandt.*

10. **Said with a loud voice**—The original implies that, he suddenly raised his voice above the tone in which he was before speaking.—*Alford.* **Stand upright**—Paul did not, like Peter, use the name of Jesus, because, unlike Peter, he had doubtless already in his preaching fully declared that any miracle he might work was wrought by Jesus' power.—*Whedon.* **Leaped and walked**—The two verbs differ in their tense; he leaped, as with a single bound, and then continued walking.—*E. H. Plumptre.*

11. **What Paul had done**—Done as the messenger and instrument of Christ. **In the speech of Lycaonia**—This clause is inserted to explain what might otherwise seem strange—why the apostles did not interfere sooner to prevent the idolatry of the natives. It was because they did not understand the language in which they spoke. Just as a Welsh crowd, after being excited to an overpowering degree

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on him, and seeing that he had faith to be ¹made whole, said with a loud voice, Stand upright on thy feet.

11 And he leaped up and walked. And when the multitudes saw what Paul had done, they lifted up their voice, saying in the speech of Lyc-a-o'-ni-a. The gods are come down to us in the 12 likeness of men. And they called Bar'na-bas, ²Ju'pi-ter; and Paul,

¹ Or, saved.—² Gr. Zeus.

by the English discourse of some great Methodist, might express its emotions in Welsh.—*Farrar.* **The gods are come down**—It was a common belief among the ancients that the gods occasionally visited the earth in the form of men. Such a belief with regard to Jupiter, "the father of gods and men," would be natural in any rural district.—*J. S. Howson.* This shows that the "gift of tongues" which Paul possessed so largely (1 Cor. 14. 18) did not consist in a supernatural knowledge of every provincial *patois* with which he came in contact.—*E. H. Plumptre.* No such cry would have been possible in the great cities where the confluence of a debased polytheism and philosophical speculation had ended in utter skepticism.—*E. H. Plumptre.*

The very name of Lycaonia, according to the tradition, was derived from an old mythological fable of Jupiter having come down in the form of a man to pay a visit to their king, Lycaon. Lycaon, doubting the divinity of this visitor in human shape, determined to put him to the test. For this purpose he butchered a child, and had him brought upon the table as disguised food for his guest. Jupiter in wrath burned his palace with lightning, and transformed the brutal king into a wolf.—*Whedon.*

12. **They called Barnabas, Jupiter**—Their choice of Barnabas for Jove seems to show that "the Son of Exhortation" was marked by a calm dignity suited to his character, and that Paul was, as he himself says, "in bodily presence weak;" but as he was the chief speaker they took him for Hermes, (Mercury,) the interpreter and messenger of the gods.—*W. Smith.* Jupiter, in Greek *Zeus*, was the king of the gods in Greek mythology. He was usually represented as sitting upon a throne of gold or ivory, holding in one hand a thunderbolt, and in the other a scepter of cypress.—**Jupiter . . . Mercurius** [Rev. Ver., *Mercury.*].—The reason why the Lycaonians fixed upon Jupiter

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ter; and Paul, Mer-cu'ri-us, because he was the chief speaker.

13 Then the priest of Ju'pi-ter, which was before their city, brought oxen and garlands unto the gates, and ⁹would have done sacrifice with the people.

14 Which when the apostles, Bar'na-bas and Paul, heard of, ¹⁰they rent their clothes, and ran in among the people, crying out,

15 And saying, Sirs, why do ye these things? ¹¹We also are men of like passions with you, and preach unto you that ye should turn from ¹²these vanities

Revised Version.

⁹Mer'cu-ry, because he was the chief speaker. And the priest of ²Ju'piter whose temple was before the city, brought oxen, and garlands unto the gates, and would have done sacrifice with the multitudes. But when the apostles, Bar'na-bas and Paul, heard of it, they rent their garments, and sprang forth among the multitude. 15 crying out and saying, Sirs, why do ye these things? We also are men of like ⁴passions with you, and bring you good tidings, that ye should turn from these vain things unto the

⁹ Dan. 9. 46.—¹⁰ Matt. 26. 65.—¹¹ James 5. 17; Rev. 19. 10. ¹² 1 Sam. 12. 21; Jer. 14. 22; Amos 2. 4; 1 Cor. 8. 4.

³ Gr. *Hermes*.—⁴ Or, *nature*.

in preference to other gods, may have been because the city of Lystra was under the special protection of Jupiter. He had a temple before the city, and it was a heathen notion that the gods sometimes appeared in those cities of which they were the tutelary deities. Mercury was added because he was the inseparable attendant of Jupiter. Besides, there was a tradition that Jupiter and Mercury once came down and visited the neighboring country of Phrygia, where they were received and entertained by Philemon and Baucis.—*P. J. Gloag*. In this instance, as in so many others, the Scripture, in its incidental descriptions of the heathen world, presents "undesigned coincidences" with the facts ascertained from heathen memorials.—*J. S. Howson*.

13. The priest of Jupiter—Who would naturally assume prominence on such an occasion. Before their city—The Rev. Ver. has "*whose temple was before their city*." Either the temple was in the open square at the entrance of the city, or was in a general way recognized as its protecting shrine. Brought oxen and garlands—"Bulls and garlands." The meaning is not that the bulls were wreathed with the garlands; these last may have been to hang on the doors of the house where the apostles were, or for manifold purposes connected with the sacrifice. They brought them not to the gates of the city, but to the doors of the outer court of the house. See chap. 12. 18.—*Alford*. Would have done sacrifice—This would have involved cutting the throats of the oxen, catching the blood in a *patena*, or deep dish, and pouring it upon an altar. There may have been such an altar in the *atrium*, or one may have been improvised for the occasion.—*E. H. Plumptre*.

14. The apostles—This is the first place

where Paul and Barnabas are so called. Paul constantly claims for himself the title in his epistles. See Rom. 1. 1; 1 Cor. 1. 1; 9. 1; 15. 9; 2 Cor. 1. 1; Gal. 1. 1; Col. 1. 1; 1 Tim. 1. 1; 2 Tim. 1. 1; Tit. 1. 1. It seems to have been borne in this higher sense also by James, the Lord's brother, (see Gal. 1. 19,) and by Barnabas, here and in 1 Cor. 9. 5, 6; see also Gal. 2. 9. So that there were, widening the word beyond the twelve, fifteen apostles, usually so called.—*Alford*. Heard of [Rev. Ver., *When the Apostles Paul and Barnabas heard of it*.]—They were, we may believe, in the house within the court-yard, and, therefore, did not see the sacrificial procession, but they heard the noise of the multitude, perhaps also of some sacrificial hymn, and asked what it meant.—*E. H. Plumptre*. They rent their clothes—It was the extremest expression of horror, hardly ever used except in deprecation of spoken or acted blasphemy. How far it would be fully understood by the heathen population of Lystra may be a question, but its very strangeness would startle and arrest them.—*E. H. Plumptre*. Ran in [Rev. Ver., *Sprang forth*.]

15. We also are men—A Jesuitical policy might have induced them to accept the worship in order to transfer it to the divine Jesus.—*Whedon*. Of like passions—Mortals, liable to the suffering of death, like yourselves; as in James 5. 17. Otherwise the antithesis is not so plain; for the heathen mythology made the gods themselves subject to passions and appetites, and exempted them from nothing but death and old age.—*Bentley*. Preach unto you [Rev. Ver., *Bring you good tidings*.]—This message is *glad tidings*, because it is not merely a command to abandon idolatry, but also a revelation of the true God.—*L. Abbott*. Turn from these vanities [Rev. Ver., *Vain things*.]—The

Authorized Version.

¹² unto the living God, ¹⁴ which made heaven, and earth, and the sea, and all things that are therein:

¹⁶ Who ¹⁵ in times past suffered all nations to walk in their own ways.

¹⁷ Nevertheless ¹⁶ he left not himself without witness, in that he did good, and ¹⁷ gave us rain from heaven, and fruitful seasons, filling our hearts with food and gladness.

¹⁸ And with these sayings scarce re-

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living God, who made the heaven and the earth and the sea, and all that in them is: who in the generations gone by suffered all the nations to walk in their own ways. And yet he left not himself without witness, in that he did good, and gave you from heaven rains and fruitful seasons, filling your hearts with food and gladness. And with these sayings scarce restrained they the

¹² 1 Thess. 1. 9.—¹⁴ Rev. 14. 7.—¹⁵ Psa. 81. 12; 1-Pet. 4. 3.—¹⁶ Chap. 17. 27; Rom. 1. 20.—¹⁷ Deut. 11. 14; Lev. 26. 4; Job 5. 10; Psa. 66. 10; 147. 8; Jer. 14. 22; Matt. 5. 45.

words "vanity" and "vain" were almost the invariable terms used by Jews to describe the emptiness and worthlessness of heathen worship, (Eph. 4. 17; 1 Peter 1. 18; and in the Old Testament, 1 Sam. 12. 21; 2 Kings 17. 15.)—*E. H. Plumptre. The living God, which made heaven*—The Greeks generally did not regard the gods as the creators of material things; matter was eternal; the gods themselves were created in time; thus Zeus was the son of Chronos and Rhea, and Mercury was the son of Zeus, or Jupiter; and in their mythology the various domains of nature had each its own deity.—*L. Abbott.*

16. Who in times past [Rev. Ver., *In the generations gone*] **suffered**—We have here the first germ of what may be fairly described as St. Paul's philosophy of history. The "times of ignorance" had been permitted by God, and those who had lived in them would be equitably dealt with, and judged according to their knowledge. The same thought meets us again in the speech at Athens, (chap. 17. 30.) In Rom. 1. 2, 11 we meet with it, in an expanded form, as a more complete indication of the righteousness of God. The ignorance and the sins of the Gentile world had been allowed to run their course, as the law had been allowed to do its partial and imperfect work among the Jews, as parts, if one may so speak, of a great divine drama, leading both to feel the need of redemption, and preparing both for its reception.—*E. H. Plumptre. All nations*—Better, *all the heathen*; the term used being that which is always employed of the nations outside the covenant of Israel.—*E. H. Plumptre. To walk in their own ways*—Yet we must not understand the apostle absolutely, but comparatively only; there never was any man, much less any nation, whom God suffered to go on in a course of sin without any stop.—*Burkitt.*

17. He left not himself without witness—Although the Gentiles in past generations had no written revelation, yet they were not left in complete darkness. God left among them the witnesses of his existence and perfections in the works of creation, and in his benevolent dealings with them. And accordingly we find that several of the heathen philosophers became acquainted with God through the light of nature. Socrates and Plato, for example, though in a certain sense heathens, yet were in another sense the worshipers of the true God. And this knowledge of the true God was perhaps more extensive than is generally supposed.—*P. J. Gloag. In that he did good*—With these words the apostle would turn the attention of the Lystrans from the false gods they worshipped to the real Giver of every good. They were indebted for the blessings of life, which they ascribed to Jupiter and Mercury, to the living God.—*P. J. Gloag. The words gave us rain from heaven* [Rev. Ver., *Gave you from heaven rains*, etc.] had a remarkable applicability in a country where we have seen from Strabo (on verse 6) that there was *great scarcity of water*. He relates that in one city of Lycaonia, where water was reached by digging the wells very deep, it was sold for money. **Filling our hearts** [Rev. Ver., *Your hearts*.] The word *hearts* is here used as a Hebraism to denote *persons themselves*.—*Barnes. With food and gladness*—The apostle leaves *them* to draw the conclusion, from these premises, that it would be the height of ingratitude (and impiety) to transfer to the creature the worship due only to the Creator.—*Dr. Hales.*

18. With these sayings—It is to be observed that Paul in this discourse, as well as in that to the Athenians, (chap. 17,) dwells upon those truths which his hearers could appreciate;

Authorized Version.

strained they the people, that they had not done sacrifice unto them.

he builds upon the principles of natural religion, thus affording to all succeeding missionaries an example for imitation in their reasoning with the heathen.—*P. J. Gloag*. **Scarce restrained they the people**—As old Lycaon had been destroyed by not recognizing the incarnate Jupiter, so these Lycaonians are fearful lest they shall make a similar mistake, and be deceived in mistaking these gods for men. They would, therefore, insist upon it, and stay on the safer side.—*Whedon*. How hard a matter it is to rectify such mistakes in religion as time and general consent have rooted and riveted in the minds of men!—*Burkitt*.

Authorities to be Consulted.

Schaff's History of the Apostolic Church, 241. Milman's History of Christianity, i, 390. Smith's New Testament History, 446. Conybeare and Howson's St. Paul, chap. vi. Farrar's St. Paul, chap. xxi. Arnot's Church in the House, 299. Bonar's Bible Thoughts and Themes, iii, 158. The Preacher, (London,) v, 11. Preacher's Lantern, i, 507. Freeman's Bible Manners and Customs, Nos. 835-837. Foster's Cyclopaedia of Illustrations, [Figures marked with a star refer to poetical volumes]—verse 3: 3973; verse 7: *2141; verse 11: *3724; verse 15: *2458, 8759, 11026, 1849.

Revised Version.

multitudes from doing sacrifice unto them.

Practical Thoughts.

[THE PREACHERS OF THE GOSPEL.]

1. The preachers of the gospel work together, for encouragement and help to each other, and for their mutual advancement of the truth. Ver. 1.
2. The preachers of the gospel seek the places where they can reach with the truth the masses of people. Ver. 1.
3. The preachers of the gospel must expect to meet opposition, misrepresentation, and violence in the path of duty. Vers. 2-5.
4. The preachers of the gospel are all the more bold in their testimony when enemies rise up against them. Ver. 3.
5. The preachers of the gospel, when silenced in one place, do not hesitate to preach and labor in another. Vers. 6, 7.
6. The preachers of the gospel may depend upon the presence and help of God in answer to their faith. Vers. 8-10.
7. The preachers of the gospel often see the signs of faith in the countenances of those whom they address. Ver. 9.
8. The preachers of the gospel are never willing to be exalted at the expense of their Lord, but seek to hide themselves under the truth which they proclaim. Vers. 14-18.

A. D. 46.]

LESSON XII.

[June 17.

END OF FIRST MISSIONARY JOURNEY.—Acts 14. 19-28.

GOLDEN TEXT.—Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost.—MATT. 28, 19.

TIME.—A. D. 46, immediately succeeding the last lesson.

PLACES.—Various places in Asia Minor and Syria.

INTRODUCTION.—The first missionary journey in the annals of the Church has now come to its close. The two missionaries have demonstrated the power of the Gospel to reach the hearts of men who are furthest from the knowledge of God. They have won their trophies of grace from the synagogue, and plucked souls from the very temples of the heathen gods. They have faced opposition, persecution, death itself, and now they turn to retrace their steps, to revisit the Churches which they have planted, and to report the success of the Gospel to the disciples who have sent them forth.

Authorized Version.

19 And ¹there came thither *certain* Jews from An²ti-och and I-co³'ni-um, who persuaded the people, ²and, having stoned Paul, drew *him* out of the city, supposing he ³had been dead.

¹ Chap. 13, 45.—² 2 Cor. 11, 25.—³ 2 Cor. 1, 8.

19. There came . . . *certain* [Rev. Ver. omits *certain*] Jews from Antioch and Iconium—See notes, Lesson X, verses 14 and 15.]



The context shows that the Pisidian Antioch is meant. The strength of the hostility is shown by the facts, (1) that the Jews of the two

cities were acting in concert, and (2) that those of the former had traveled not less than one hundred and thirty miles to hinder the apostle's work.—*E. H. Plumptre*. **Persuaded the people** [Rev. Ver., *Having persuaded*.]—When they heard of the miracle worked on the lame man, and found how great an effect it had produced on the people of Lystra, they would be ready with a new interpretation of this occurrence. They would say that it had been accomplished, not by divine agency, but by some diabolical magic, as once they had said at Jerusalem, that he who came "to destroy the works of the devil," cast out devils "by Beelzebub the prince of the devils." And this is probably the true explanation of that sudden change of feeling among the Lystrans, which at first sight is very surprising.—*Conybeare and Howson*. The Lycaonians, in the sulky revulsion of their feelings, and with a somewhat uneasy sense that they had put them-

Revised Version.

19 But there came Jews thither from An¹ti-och and I-co²'ni-um: and having persuaded the multitudes, they stoned Paul, and dragged him out of the city, supposing that he was dead.

selves into a ridiculous position, were inclined to avenge their error on those who had innocently caused it. They were a faithless and fickle race, liable, beyond the common wont of mobs, to sudden gusts of feeling and impulse.—*Farrar*. **Having stoned Paul** [Rev. Ver., *They stoned Paul*.]—The mode of punishment, as elsewhere, shows that it was planned and executed by Jews. They apparently were eager to satisfy themselves that they were inflicting punishment on a blasphemer, stoning him to death, and casting him out to be buried with the burial of an ass.—*E. H. Plumptre*. It is observable that we read of no injury being offered to Barnabas. It is probable that it was Paul's superior zeal, as being the chief speaker, that marked him out as the special object of persecution.—*P. J. Gloag*. **Drew him out of the city** [Rev. Ver., *Dragged him out*.]—This attempted infliction of death, in Palestine, would not have been permitted within the city, (chap. 7. 58;) in this heathen city no scruple prevented it.—*L. Abbott*.

How fickle the world is! They first bring garlands, then stones.—*Starke*.

"Once was I stoned," wrote the Apostle of the Gentiles, referring to this event. Yes, Paul; and once another thing happened, equally memorable. Once he stoned another, and once he was stoned himself. Strange revolution of the wheel! Now it is his turn to enact the martyr, praying for his murderers, and looking forward to rest. What a crowd of memories must have rushed up when he felt his spirit swooning away

Authorized Version.

20 Howbeit, as the disciples stood round about him, he rose up, and came into the city: and the next day he departed with Bar'na-bas to Der'be.

21 And when they had preached the Gospel to that city, and ^ahad taught many, they returned again to Lys'tra, and to I-co'ni-um, and An'ti-och,

^a Had made many disciples.

Authorized Version.

20 But as the disciples stood round about him, he rose up, and entered into the city: and on the morrow he went forth with Bar'na-bas to Der'be.

21 And when they had preached the gospel to that city, and had made many disciples, they returned to Lys'tra, and to I-co'ni-um, and to An'ti-

under the stone shower! This would seem the echo of his own dread act. Stephen's heroic death must have left its mark deep on the heart of the converted Paul. Perhaps when he felt what he believed to be the sleep of death creeping over his senses, he expected at his next awakening he would find himself in Stephen's company.—*W. Arnot.*

20. As the disciples stood round—They, it is obvious, had been powerless to prevent the attack; but they stole out when all was over, it may be, with the purpose of giving at least a decent interment. We may fairly think of Lois and Eunice and Timotheus (2 Tim. 1. 5) as present in that crowd, weeping first for sorrow, and then for exceeding joy, to find that the teacher whom they loved was stunned only, and not dead.—*E. H. Plumptre.* **He rose up**—But Paul was not dead. This had not been a Jewish stoning, conducted with fatal deliberateness, but a sudden riot, in which the mode of attack may have been due to accident. Paul, liable at all times to the swoons which accompany nervous organizations, had been stunned but not killed, and while the disciples stood in an agonized group around what they thought to be his corpse, he recovered his consciousness and raised himself from the ground.—*Farrar.* **Came into the city**—Perhaps in disguise, or under cover of evening, for all these details were as nothing to Paul, and are not preserved by his biographer, he re-entered the little city.—*Farrar.* It was necessary to show the discouraged heathen converts that Paul was still alive.—*Gossner.* **The next day he departed** [Rev. Ver., *On the morrow he went forth.*]—It is grievous to think of one who had been so cruelly treated forced to make his way for twenty miles with his life in his hand, and still all battered and bleeding from the horrible attack of the day before.—*Farrar.* **To Derbe**—See note, Lesson XI, verse 6.

Was it in the house of Eunice and Lois (2 Tim. 1. 5) that he found the sweet repose and tender ministrations which he would need more than ever after an experience so frightful? If Lystra

was thus the scene of one of his intensest sufferings, and one which, lightly as it is dwelt upon, probably left on his already enfeebled constitution its life-long traces, it also brought him, by the merciful providence of God, its own immense compensation. For it was at Lystra that he converted the son of Eunice, then perhaps a boy of fifteen, for whom he conceived that deep affection which breathes through every line of the epistles addressed to him. This was the Timotheus whom he chose as the companion of his future journeys, whom he sent on his most confidential messages, to whom he entrusted the oversight of his most important churches; whom he summoned as the consolation of his last imprisonment; whom he always regarded as the son in the faith who was nearest and dearest to his heart.—*Farrar.*

21. When they had preached—The wounds of the apostle are still bleeding; yet he already resumes the preaching of the cross of Christ; his very wounds preach concerning the power of faith.—*Leonhardi.* **Taught many** [Rev. Ver., *Made many disciples.*]—His work seems to have been happy and successful, crowned with the conversion of those disciples whom he ever regarded as "his hope and joy and crown of rejoicing." Here, too, he gained one more friend in Gaius of Derbe, who afterward accompanied him on his last visit to Jerusalem.—*Farrar.* It may be that the Jews were ignorant that Paul was yet alive. That secret, pregnant with danger to the safety of the apostle, would be profoundly kept by the little band of Lystrenian disciples.—*Farrar.* Accordingly Paul omits Derbe when enumerating, years afterward to Timothy, the places where he suffered persecution during his first missionary journey: "Thou hast fully known the persecutions, afflictions, which came unto me at Antioch, at Iconium, at Lystra." 2 Tim. 3. 11. There is here, as Paley remarks, an undesigned coincidence between the history and the epistle.—*P. J. Gloag.* **They returned again**—They were not far from the famous pass, called the "Cilician Gates," which leads direct into that province; but, notwithstanding all that had befallen him, Paul prefers returning by the churches

Authorized Version.

22 Confirming the souls of the disciples, *and* exhorting them to continue in the faith, and that we must ⁴through much tribulation enter into the kingdom of God.

23 And when they had ⁵ordained them elders in every church, and had prayed

⁴ Matt. 10. 38; 16. 24; John 15. 18; Rom. 8. 17; 2 Tim. 2. 11; 8. 12.—⁵ Titus 1. 5.

which he had founded to a short and easy journey to the coast by his own home.—*Alford*. From each of the cities where they had preached the gospel they had departed suddenly, before the churches had been properly settled in the faith, and before arrangements had been made for their government; and hence they felt constrained to revisit them.—*P. J. Gloag*. To **Lystra . . . Iconium . . . Antioch** [See on these places in Lesson X, verses 14, 51, and Lesson XI, verses 1, 6.]—They went back, over the wild and dusty plain, the twenty miles from Derbe to Lystra, the forty miles from Lystra to Iconium, the sixty miles from Iconium to Antioch. It may well be supposed that it needed no slight heroism to face once more the dangers that might befall them. Precautions of secrecy they doubtless took, and cheerfully faced the degrading necessity of guarded movements, and of entering cities, perhaps in disguise, perhaps only at late nightfall and early dawn. The Christians had early to learn those secret trysts and midnight gatherings and private watchwords by which alone they could elude the fury of their enemies.—*Farrar*.

22. Confirming . . . and exhorting [Rev. Ver. omits *and*.]—The word *exhorting* indicates the manner in which the apostles confirmed the disciples; not by any outward rite, but by exhortation.—*P. J. Gloag*. **Continue in the faith**—The question meets us whether “faith” is used in its subjective sense, the “feeling of trust,” or objectively, as including the main substance of what was believed and taught—“a belief or creed.” That the latter meaning had become established a few years after Luke wrote we see in 1 Tim. 5. 8; Jude verses 8, 20; and on the whole it seems probable that it is so used here.—*E. H. Plumptre*. **We must through much tribulation** [Rev. Ver., *Many tribulations*.]—There is some question among the critics as to the significance of the pronoun *we* in this sense; some regard it as indicating a general law applicable to all Christians; the meaning then would be, We as Christians enter the kingdom through tribulation. Others regard it

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22 och, confirming the souls of the disciples, exhorting them to continue in the faith, and that through many tribulations we must enter into the kingdom of God. And when they had appointed for them elders in every church, and had prayed with

as an indication that the words of the apostle are in part quoted; they refer to the persecutions which they have themselves suffered, as an evidence that all must enter the kingdom of God in the same way.—*L. Abbott*. This is true especially of ages of persecution; it is true, in a less degree, even in Christian lands, and in the ordinary state of a world unconverted. Nay, it is even true internally of every Christian, since the depravities of the heart itself are ever prone, unless kept in firm subjection, to rise up in insurrection against the grace of God.—*Whedon*. **Enter into the kingdom of God**—As these converts had already entered the Church of Christ, and so were members of Christ's visible kingdom, “the kingdom of God” here must refer to the state of the redeemed in heaven.—*P. J. Gloag*.

Much tribulation! Yes: but they will pass *through it*. What a word is this! Thanks be to God for this blessed transitive preposition! No part of speech so sweet as this in all the lessons of the grammarian! There is trouble, but the disciples of Christ get through it. Trouble changes its nature when you are assured that it cannot last long.—*W. Arnot*.

23. When they had ordained [Rev. Ver. *appointed*.]—*When they had elected them elders*. The verb means, *appointed by suffrage*, and probably, by the analogy of chap. 6. 2-6, (see 2 Cor. 8. 19,) the strict meaning is here to be retained. The word will not bear Jerome's and Chrysostom's sense of “*laying on of hands*,” adopted by Roman Catholic expositors. Nor is there any reason here for departing from the usual meaning of electing by show of hands. The apostles may have admitted by ordination those *presbyters whom the churches elected*.—*Alford*. **Elders in every church**—*Elder* is the translation of the equivalent word, which we still preserve in its Greek form of *presbyter*, and which is contracted, through the old French forms *prester* and *prestre*, into *priest*.—*W. Smith*. The presbyters or bishops of the apostolic period were the regular teachers and pastors, preachers and leaders, of the congregations. It was

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with fasting, they commended them to the Lord, on whom they believed.

24 And after they had passed throughout Pisidⁱa, they came to Pam-phylⁱa.

25 And when they had preached the word in Per'ga, they went down into At-ta-li'a;

26 And thence sailed to An'ti-och, from whence ^ethey had been recommended to the grace of God for the work which they fulfilled.

27 And when they were come, and

¶ Chap. 13. 1, 3.

their office to conduct all public worship, to take care of souls, to enforce discipline, and to manage the church property. Of course, all had not the same talent; one excelled in teaching, another in pastoral duties, a third in the talent for ruling; and we may readily suppose that, where there were several of them, they divided the various duties of their calling among themselves, according to endowments, taste, and necessity. This, however, was always regulated by circumstances, and by no means authorizes us to suppose that there were two different kinds of presbyters and two separate offices of government and doctrine.—*Schaff*. **Prayed with fasting**—It is a legitimate inference, from this recurrence of the act, that Paul and Barnabas recognized it as an established rule or canon of the Church that these two acts should jointly serve as a preparation for the solemn work of appointing men to spiritual functions. Without prayer such an appointment was a mockery, and fasting served to intensify prayer.—*E. H. Plumptre*. **Commended them to the Lord**—Here it implies an absolute trust in God, as ordering all things for his Church and those who love him.—*E. H. Plumptre*. An appropriate expression, since the apostles were now to leave them, uncertain whether they should ever meet again. **On whom they believed** [Rev. Ver., *Had believed*].

What boots a well-organized Church if it consists of dead members? The living may live without organization, but organization is nothing without life. Let us remember the apostolic order of these two things: It is first, get souls confirmed, and then get the community constituted under a sound and scriptural government.—*W. Arnot*.

24, 25. Pisidia . . . Pamphylia—See notes, Lesson X, verses 13, 14. **Preached the word in Perga**—See note, Lesson X, ver. 13. Since on their first journey they had been unable

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fasting, they commended them to the Lord, on whom they had believed.

24 And they passed through Pisidⁱa,

25 and came to Pam-phylⁱa. And when they had spoken the word in Per'ga, they went down to At-ta-li'a;

26 and thence they sailed to An'ti-och, from whence they had been committed to the grace of God for the

27 work which they had fulfilled. And when they were come, and had

to preach in Perga, they did so now.—*Farrar*. If our conjecture is correct, that they went up from Perga in spring, and returned at the close of autumn, and spent all the hotter months in the year in the elevated districts, they would again pass in a few days through a great change of seasons, and almost from summer to winter. The people of Pamphylia would have returned from their cold residences to the warm shelter of the plain by the seaside, and Perga would be full of its inhabitants. The Gospel was preached within the walls of the city, through which the apostles had merely passed on their journey to the interior.—*J. S. Houson*. **Attalia**—A maritime town at the mouth of the river Catarrhactes, in Pamphylia, not far from the border of Lycia, built by Attalus Philadelphus, King of Pergamus, in a convenient position to command the trade of Syria or Egypt. It is still an important place, called Satalia. To reach it they had to cross the plain from Perga. *Alford*.

26. **They sailed to Antioch**—To Antioch in Syria, the missionary center from which they had set forth. On this city, see Lesson VII, vers. 19, 20. **From whence they had been recommended** [Rev. Ver., *committed*.]—See Lesson IX, vers. 1-3, notes. **The work which they had fulfilled**—Taking into account the time consumed in traveling, we are hardly at liberty to suppose that the first circuit occupied much more than a year, and they may have returned to the Syrian Antioch in the late spring of A. D. 46.—*Farrar*. Dr. Gloag, however, thinks that the time occupied might be about three or four years, (A. D. 45-48.) Renan supposes the time to have been four or five years, and that during this period Paul supported himself, as he afterward did at Corinth and Ephesus, by the labor of his hands.

27, 28. **Gathered the church . . . rehearsed**—Paul and Barnabas were sent forth by

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had gathered the church together, they rehearsed all that God had done with them, and how he had opened the door of faith unto the Gen'tiles.

28 And there they abode long time with the disciples.

*1 Cor. 16. 9; 2 Cor. 2. 12; Col. 4. 3; Rev. 3. 8.

the Church of Antioch, and now on their return they present their report. **God had done with them**—They regard God as the mighty worker, and themselves as only the instruments or tools with which, in his hands, the work was wrought. **Opened the door of faith**—That is, given them an opportunity to know, and ability to believe the Gospel which, like a door, was formerly shut to them, but now mercifully opened, and which was the far greater mercy; yet, Almighty God did not only open the door of the Gospel to them, by bringing his word among them, but he opened the door of their hearts to receive it, and entertain it when brought.—*Burkitt*. By the success of the Gospel among the Gentiles the divine will was now plainly made known, that they should receive salvation. **There they abode long time**—How long is uncertain, depending on the time occupied by the missionary journey, but probably two or three years, (A. D. 49, 50.)—*P. J. Gloag*.

Authorities to be Consulted.

Smith's New Testament History, 447. Schaff's History of the Apostolic Church, 242. (On "The Eldership," see Schaff, page 528.) Milman's History of Christianity, i, 391. Conybeare and Howson's St. Paul, chap. vi. Farrar's St. Paul, chap. xxi. Arnot's Church in the House, 305. The Preacher, (London,) i, 143.
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gathered the church together, they rehearsed all things that God had done with them, and how that he had opened a door of faith unto the 28 Gen'tiles. And they tarried no little time with the disciples.

Dean Melvill's Lectures, Foster's Cyclopaedia of Illustrations [Figures marked with a star refer to poetical volumes]—ver. 22: 76-92, *2028, 5764, 5771, 6381-6412, 12049; ver. 23: 10602; ver. 27: 10823.

Practical Thoughts.

[THE RESULTS OF MISSIONS.]

1. The first missionary journey shows the power of the Gospel to sustain its preachers under discouragement, opposition, and danger. Vers. 19, 20.
2. It shows the promise of Christ, "Lo, I am with you," fulfilled in the darkest and most trying hours. Ver. 20.
3. It shows that missionary Churches and disciples of missions may hold out in faithfulness though surrounded by an opposing world. Ver. 22.
4. It shows that those who expect to enter the heavenly kingdom must expect troubles in the earthly kingdom of Christ. Ver. 22.
5. It shows that some organization is necessary to hold together and build up the body of believers in Christ. Ver. 23.
6. It shows that those who rely on the grace of God while working for his cause will not fail. Ver. 26.
7. It shows that all men, however dark or sinful, may enter the open doors of the Gospel. Ver. 27.

THIRD QUARTER.

STUDIES IN OLD TESTAMENT HISTORY.

B. C. 1451.]

LESSON I.

[July 1.

JOSHUA SUCCESSOR TO MOSES.—Josh. 1. 1-9.

GOLDEN TEXT.—Be strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might.—EPH. 6. 10.

TIME and PLACE.—The date of these events is, according to the common chronology, 1451 years before Christ. The place was Shittim, in the plains of Moab, about seven miles east of the Jordan, and opposite Jericho. Num. 33. 49. Here, in the shade of the acacia groves, Israel had been beguiled to licentiousness by the Midianites, "in the matter of Peor," (Num. 25;) here they had been visited by the Divine judgments for their sin, and here they had witnessed the last works and received the last counsels of Moses.—*D. Steele.*



INTRODUCTION. *The Book of Joshua.*—We may assume that the Book of Joshua was written prior to the age of David. It is manifest, however, that the book in its integrity, as we now have it, was not the work of Joshua, because it records his death and burial, (chap. 24. 29-33;) but it does not follow

from this that the remainder of the book, or at least a very large portion of it, may not have been written by Joshua, or at least had his superintendence and sanction.—*S. Leathes.* The design of this book was evidently to record the leading events in the history of Israel from the death of Moses to the death of Joshua; to record the conquest and settlement of Canaan, and especially to magnify the inviolable faithfulness of Jehovah as a covenant-keeping God. The central idea on which the whole work rests is announced in Joshua's divine commission at the very beginning of the book. Chap. 1. 1-9. Hence the importance of this book as a connecting link between the Book of the Law and the subsequent history of Israel in Palestine cannot be over estimated. It holds a relation to the Pentateuch similar to that which the Acts of the Apostles holds to the four Gospels. A large portion of the work is invaluable for the study of sacred geography. It is a complete Doomsday-book of Palestine, and all modern research and discovery tend more and more to confirm its accuracy.—*D. Steele.* *The Life of Joshua.*—The life of Joshua naturally divides itself into four sections, (1) His youth and early manhood in Egypt, of which we have no record in Scripture; (2) The forty years intervening between the Exodus and the death of Moses, in which he appears as Moses' attendant, and intrusted by him with important commissions, civil and military; (3) The period between the crossing of Jordan and the complete subjugation of Canaan, in which period Joshua comes before us as the divinely appointed captain and governor of Israel, including (a) the conquest and (b) the settlement of the land; (4) His calm and honored old age, passed at Timnath-serah, of which no events are recorded, except his closing address of warning and counsel to the assembled tribes and their elders.—*E. Venables.* His original name, *Hoshea*, "salvation," is transformed into *Jehoshua* or *Joshua*, "God's salvation;" and this, according to the modifications which Hebrew names underwent in their passage through the Greek language, took, in the later ages of the Jewish Church, sometimes the form of *Jasan*, but more frequently that which has now become indelibly impressed upon history as the greatest of all names—*Jesus*.—*Dean Stanley.* *The Character of Joshua.*—In the kingdom of God he is great who knows that of himself he is nothing. This greatness had Joshua. Among the heroes of the sacred history he stands forth as the one, above almost all others, free from self-will. The most conscientious fidelity toward the law, and a disposition the most imperturbably theocratic, distinguish him. He is prudent, circumspect where he has to act of himself, for he conducts the wars of the Lord; but unhesitating, quick, and decided where the Lord sends him. His courage is humility, his strength is faith, his wisdom is obedience and fear of the Lord. A gentle disposition, but the furthest possible from feebleness, as is proved by his sternly solemn sentence upon Achan, and the strictness with which he executes the curse upon the Canaanites. Such a union of mildness with strength, of simplicity with prudence, of humility with magnanimity, has in it something evangelical. This peculiarity of his character, together with the peculiarity of the period in the kingdom of God in which he lived, and of the position which he took, makes him and his work a rich type of Him that was to come. He leads the people into the land of promise and of rest, but there is yet a better rest to be enjoyed, to which his antitype and namesake must introduce us. (Heb. 4. 9.)—*F. R. Fay.* *Joshua and Jesus.*—Starke discusses the typical relation of Joshua to Christ, and establishes the

following points : (1) As Joshua led the children of Israel through the Jordan into the land of Canaan, so Christ leads his believing followers finally through death into the heavenly Canaan ; (2) Joshua carried out what Moses could not effect, and so the law of Moses could insure to men no peace and no blessedness, which Jesus and his gospel can, (Rom. 8. 3 ; Heb. 7. 25 ;) Joshua and Jesus begin after Moses leaves off ; (3) Joshua was the leader of the bodily Israel, overcame their enemies, and distributed to them their land ; all which Jesus, the Captain of salvation, does for the spiritual Israel, (Heb. 2. 10).—*F. Johnson.*

1 Now after the death of Mo'ses the servant of the LORD it came to pass, that the LORD spake unto Josh'u-a

¹ Deut. 1. 38.

1. **Now**—The literal rendering of the Hebrew is, "And it was (or happened) after the death of Moses, and the Lord spake," etc. This rendering discloses more perfectly the use of the copulative "and" in the original, which is so employed as to bring this book into immediate connection with the foregoing, and thus makes it a regular *continuation* of the sacred narrative begun and carried on by Moses in the five preceding books.—*G. Bush.* **After the death of Moses**—Never, in the history of the Chosen People, could there have been such a blank as that when they became conscious that "Moses the servant of the Lord was dead." He who had been their leader, their lawgiver, their oracle, as far back as their memory could reach, was taken from them at the very moment when they seemed most to need him. It was to fill up this blank that Joshua was called. The narrative labors to impress upon us the sense that the continuity of the nation and of its high purpose was not broken by the change of person and situation.—*Dean Stanley.* **The servant of the Lord**—It is carefully to be considered that in the *economy of redemption* we are still on the ground of the old covenant, therefore on the ground of the Law, where God commands, and man has unconditionally to perform his dictates exactly to the letter, without any freedom whatever, hence as a slave, not as a child. (Rom. 8. 15.) Not even the most pious, therefore, can claim any higher distinction than this.—*F. R. Fay.* **The Lord** (in the original "*Jehovah*.)—The later Jews held the word *Jehovah* to be so sacred that they would not pronounce it. Critics suppose that the true pronunciation of the word has been lost, owing to this superstition. The Jews translated the Old Testament into Greek some time before the advent of Christ, but they would not use this most sacred name ; in order to save it from desecration on the lips of the Greek reader they used in place of it the Greek word for *Lord*.—*F. Johnson.* **The Lord spake**—No doubt directly, by

the son of Nun, Mo'ses' minister, ¹saying,

2 Mo'ses ²my servant is dead ; now

² Deut. 34. 5.

an immediate revelation, though not as God spake to Moses, "mouth to mouth," (Num. 12. 8.) Though upon Joshua's appointment to be Moses' successor (Num. 27. 18, *sqq.*) it had been directed that "counsel should be asked" for him through the medium of Eleazar "after the judgment of Urim," yet this was evidently a resource provided to meet cases of doubt and difficulty.—*Speaker's Commentary.* **Joshua**—See Introduction to the lesson. **Son of Nun**—Nun lived and died undistinguished from the thousands of his brethren who passed all their days in the Egyptian bondage ; but his son, by his valor and piety, rescued his father's servile name from oblivion. So the poet Horace, by his genius, immortalized the Roman bondsman who begat him.—*D. Steele.* **Moses' minister**—The original word differs from that usually rendered *servant*, "in that," in the words of Gesenius, "it implies the more honorable duty or function of a free attendant." We win our way to the higher stations by performing faithfully the duties of the lower. Joshua began as the minister or attendant of Moses ; he arose to be his successor in the government of Israel.—*F. Johnson.*

When Moses is dead God speaks to Joshua. All these things were figures of us. 1 Cor. 10. 11. Moses represents the law ; Joshua, or Jesus, the Saviour. The law cannot bring us to our heavenly Canaan, but only to the borders of it. The law dies, and our Joshua leads us into our promised land in the gospel, (*Theodoret*, Prolog. 1).—*C. Wordsworth.*

2. **Moses my servant is dead**—Was this the first certain intimation of the fact which Joshua received ? It may have been ; for no one was on Mount Nebo when Moses died, and no one, therefore, could be sure of his demise unless informed of it by God.—*F. Smith.* **Now therefore arise**—Joshua was appointed and declared Moses' successor in the government before this time, and therefore doubtless entered upon the government instantly after his

therefore arise, go over this Jordan, thou, and all this people, unto the land which I do give to them, *even* to the children of Israel.

3 Every ³ place that the sole of your foot shall tread upon, that have I given unto you, as I said unto Mo'ses.

² Deut. 11. 24.

death; and here he receives confirmation from God therein.—*M. Pool.* **Go over this Jordan** [On the River Jordan, see Introduction to Lesson II.]—It was doubtless a severe trial to Joshua's faith to be thus called upon to make immediate preparation for crossing a river that was now overflowing its banks, (chap. 3. 15,) and for getting over which he was totally unprovided with the ordinary means, whether of boats or bridges. But as God had given the command, he must not doubt that he would open a way for his people.—*G. Bush.* **All this people**—Numbering, according to the last census, 601,730, from twenty years old and upward. See Num. 26. 51. Migrations on so vast a scale are not without parallel in the East. As late as the last century a whole nomadic people—400,000 Tartars—retreated under cover of a single night from the confines of Russia into their native deserts.—*D. Steele.* **The land which I do give**—Canaan, or the Land of Promise; so called because it had been promised to the patriarchs centuries before.—*D. Steele.*

God gave the land to the literal Israel by Joshua; so he gives the good land to us by Jesus, who says, "Blessed are the meek; for they shall inherit the earth, (Matt. 5. 5).—*Origen.*

Let not weeping hinder sowing, nor the withering of the most useful hands be the weakening of ours; for when God has work to do he will either find or make instruments fit to carry it on. Moses, the *servant*, is dead, but God, the *Master*, is not, he lives forever.—*M. Henry.*

3. **Every place**—That is, every place within the limits specified in the following verse. **Your feet shall tread**—The entire land was before them, and their own faith and courage were to decide how much of it they would actually possess.—*D. Steele.* They must go there, overcome the obstacles with the help and by the power of God, and take actual possession.—*Darby.* **Have I given unto you**—As God determines for each particular man his place on earth, by birth, education, external circumstances, so he determines for each people its habitation in congruity with the disposition and character which he has lent to them and the de-

4 From ⁴ the wilderness and this Leb'a-non, even unto the great river, the river Eu-phra'tes, all the land of the Hit'tites, and unto the great sea toward the going down of the sun, shall be your coast.

⁴ Gen. 15. 18; Num. 34. 8.

sign he entertains concerning them.—*F. R. Fay.* **As I said**—See Deut. 11. 24.

4. **From the wilderness**—The land should be bounded on the south by the Arabian desert, on the north by Mount Lebanon, on the east by the Euphrates, and on the west by the Mediterranean Sea, as was already promised to Abraham. Gen. 15. 18-21.—*F. R. Fay.* **This Lebanon**—The lofty mountain on the northern limit of Palestine. Lebanon is spoken of as "this Lebanon," because visible from the neighborhood in which Israel was encamped, as indeed it is from nearly every part of Palestine. Deut. 3. 8, 9.—*Speaker's Commentary.* **The river Euphrates**—The largest, the longest, and by far the most important of the rivers of Western Asia. Its entire length is about one thousand seven hundred and eighty miles, more than two thirds of which are navigable for small steam vessels.—*Whitney.* **All the land of the Hittites**—These occupied the southern extremities, and were the dominant tribe of Canaan. Their superior power and the extent of their dominions are attested by the mention of them under the name of Khita, on the Assyrian inscriptions, and still more frequently on the Egyptian inscriptions of the eighteenth and nineteenth dynasties.—*J. F. B.* **The great sea**—The Mediterranean, at whose eastern end lay the land of promise. It was to be, hence, the western boundary. The coast thus promised to the Israelites was occupied by the peoples who prospered both in commerce and in war, and by cities of great opulence and splendor. The Mediterranean ocean is called in the Bible "the Great Sea," because the greatest known to the Israelites; "the sea," emphatically, for the same reason, Gen. 49. 13; Psa. 80. 11; 107. 23, etc.—*F. Johnson.* **Your coast**—Your boundaries. These included a larger territory than the Hebrews ever possessed, except for a short time during the reigns of David and Solomon. The breadth, from Lebanon on the north to the desert on the south, is one hundred and forty miles; the length, from the Mediterranean to the Euphrates, is about four hundred miles, making an area of fifty-six thousand square miles, equal to the States of New

5 There ^ashall not any man be able to stand before thee all the days of thy life: as ^bI was with Mo'ses, so I will be with thee: I will ^cnot fail thee, nor forsake thee.

6 Be strong and of a good courage:

^a Deuteronomy 7. 24.—^b Exodus 3. 12.—^c Deuteronomy 31. 6.

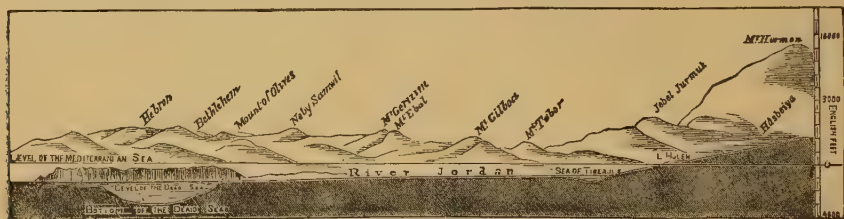
York and Vermont. But Canaan Proper, or Palestine, was only one hundred and forty miles by forty, making an area smaller than the State of New Jersey. Jehovah devised liberal things for his people, but they failed, through unbelief and cowardice, to come into immediate possession of the magnificent gift.—*D. Steele.* Going

for ^aunto this people shalt thou divide for an inheritance the land which I swear unto their fathers to give them.

7 Only be thou strong and very courageous, that thou mayest observe to do according to all the law ^awhich Mo'ses

^a Or, thou shalt cause this people to inherit the land.—
^b Num. 27. 23; chap. 11. 16.

Unto this people shalt thou divide—Or, *thou shalt cause this people to inherit the land.* The Lord would inspire Joshua with strength of soul by disclosing to him the grandeur of his mission. He reveals to him that his agency is the last link in the chain which unites prophecy and fulfillment, hope and fruition; that all



Profile Section of Palestine.

down of the sun—It was the western limit of Canaan, whose inhabitants often saw the sun sinking in splendor behind its waters.—*F. Johnson.*

5. Not any . . . able to stand before thee—That is to make a successful opposition, so long as Joshua and his people continued faithful to God, for to all God's promises there is the condition of man's fidelity. I will be with thee—He needs no other allies who is allied with the Almighty. All that he has done for Moses he pledges to do for Joshua, and all his successors who possess like precious faith.—*D. Steele.* I will not fail thee—The original expression here rendered *fail* is usually employed with reference to the relaxing and falling of the hands when they cease to grasp an object. God promises to keep hold of Joshua. He will not cast off nor abandon the leader of his people.—*F. Johnson.*

6. Be strong and of a good courage—Better, *Be strong and firm.* Michaelis remarks that the verb "to be strong" denotes strength of hand and arm to lay hold of and retain any thing within one's grasp; while "to be firm" denotes rather firmness in the knees, and ability to maintain one's position against the attack of foes. The expression occurs with increasing emphasis four times in this chapter, and is rather a command than an exhortation.—*D. Steele.*

The glorious possibilities of his nation hinge upon his own personal valor and fidelity.—*D. Steele.*

O soul, remember here, first of all, the true Joshua, thy Saviour Jesus Christ, who has for thy good acquired the heavenly Canaan, to prepare for thee a place there, that thou also mayest dwell there and remain; fight, therefore, and subdue thy foes under the lead of thy Jesus, that thou mayest also one day take it.—*Starke.*

7. Observe to do—Not only to admire and praise, but to obey. Many compliment the Bible who yet violate its precepts.—*F. Johnson.* According to all the law—The true secret of prosperity in any enterprise, great or small, lies in obedience to the divine commands. This lesson we may learn, not only from the history of Joshua, but from that of Joseph; from that of Moses; from that of Saul; from that of Uzziah; and from that of Hezekiah. Nay, it is the great lesson which runs through the pages of inspiration, and which is enforced by universal observation and experience.—*T. Smith.* Turn not from it—Perfect obedience is represented by a straight line, and a course of sin by a crooked way. Hence, the terms *righteousness*, *rectitude*, *uprightness*, and, in matters of opinion, *orthodox*; while the word *wrong* is etymologically akin to *wrung*, twisted.—*D. Steele.* That thou may—

my servant commanded thee: turn not from it *to the right hand* or *to the left*, that thou mayest ^b prosper whithersoever thou goest.

8 This ^a book of the law shall not depart out of thy mouth; but ¹⁰ thou shalt meditate therein day and night, that thou mayest observe to do according

^a Or, do wisely; Deut. 29. 9. — ^b Deut. 17. 18, 19. —
¹⁰ Psalm 1. 2.

est prosper—The original word rendered "prosper" may mean to *act wisely*, and inasmuch as wisdom brings prosperity, it also means to *prosper*. Many scholars understand it here in the first sense, "to act wisely." The strongest temptation to deviate from the commands of God is presented by pleas of expediency and policy. God would teach Joshua that these pleas are always foolish, and that not only duty, but also wisdom, is always manifested in a strict obedience to the divine law.—*F. Johnson*.

8. **This book**—Already had revelation solidified itself into a book form. The wisdom of God in selecting this form will be evident when we consider, (1) That the human race instinctively put into monumental form all the great truths, laws, discoveries, and historic events which they wish to perpetuate. (2) The untrustworthy character of oral traditions. (3) The difficulty of corrupting documents entrusted to the guardianship of a class solemnly set apart for that purpose, and imbued with a religious awe for the very letter of the sacred manuscript, or as published to the world by the multiplication of copies scattered abroad through all lands.—*D. Steele*. **Of the law**—The Pentateuch, which was laid up in the Holy of Holies in the Tabernacle (see on Deut. 31. 9, 26) where, it is probable, God was now speaking. See ver. 1. He might, therefore, well say, *This Book*, or, as it is in the original, "The Book of *this* law.—*C. Wordsworth*. **Not depart out of thy mouth**—Joshua is here commanded to teach the law to the people, and to make it the chief topic of his private conversation.—*F. Johnson*. The law is in our mouth, not only when we are incessantly preaching it, but when we are reading it intelligently for ourselves, or conversing about it with others.—*Keil*. **Thou shalt meditate therein**—We are not to think of this meditation as a learned study, but rather as a mature reflection upon the law by which Joshua penetrates more deeply into its meaning, and thus becomes qualified to speak more clearly, more pointedly, and

to all that is written therein: for ¹¹ then thou shalt make thy way prosperous, and then thou shalt ^a have good success.

9 Have not I commanded thee? Be strong and of a good courage; be ¹² not afraid, neither be thou dismayed; for the LORD thy God *is* with thee whithersoever thou goest.

¹¹ 1 Chron. 32. 13; Prov. 3. 1. — ^a Or, do wisely. — ¹² Psa. 27. 1; Jer. 1. 8.

with greater power to the people.—*F. R. Fay*. **Have good success**—The word in the original is the same with that in the latter clause of verse 7, and like that may be translated, "do wisely."

If ever any man's business might have excused him from meditation and other acts of devotion, one would think that Joshua's might at this time. It was a great trust that was lodged in his hands; the care of it was enough to fill him, if he had ten souls, and yet he must find time and thoughts for meditation.—*M. Henry*.

9. **Have I not**—"Have I not" (*nonne*) is a rhetorical mode of saying, "Behold, I have," the assurance being clothed in the form of an affirmative question.—*Keil*. **Commanded thee**—The Lord spoke to Joshua as he had spoken to Moses, and as he afterward spoke to the prophets.—*F. R. Fay*. **The Lord . . . is with thee**—As the soldier's valor is stimulated by the eye of his captain, so a vivid realization of the immediate presence of God is the best safeguard against unmanly terror.—*M. S. Terry*.

Authorities to be Consulted.

Smith's Old Testament History, chap. xvi. Ewald's History of Israel, vol. ii, p. 229. Dean Stanley's History of the Jewish Church, Lecture X. Dean Milman's History of the Jews, vol. i, Book v. Thornley Smith's Joshua and his Times, chap. ii. Articles on "Joshua," and "The Book of Joshua" in the Bible Educator, vol. i, p. 389; vol. ii, p. 1, and in Introduction to Speaker's Commentary, vol. ii. Robinson's Scripture Characters, p. 138. Dr. T. Guthrie's Studies in Character from the Old Testament, p. 177. Topics for Teachers, (J. C. Gray,) i, 234. See also the Lesson Helps for 1875, on Lesson I, 1st Quar., "Joshua Encouraged." Foster's Cyclopedia of Illustrations [Figures marked with a star refer to poetical quotations]—ver. 1: 12100; ver. 5: *1566, 5963, 10011, 10013; ver. 8: 3850.

Practical Root Thoughts.

[THE NEEDS OF GOD'S WORKERS.]

1. God's workers need the training which comes from service and association with his people. Ver. 1.
2. God's workers need the call from God to the work of his kingdom. Ver. 2.
3. God's workers need the promise of God as an assurance in the way of duty. Vers. 3, 4.

4. God's workers need the presence of God, as their encouragement and their strength. Ver. 5.

5. God's workers need courage in the way in which God leads them. Ver. 6.

6. God's workers need the guidance of God's word in the path of duty. Vers. 7, 8.

7. God's workers need to study well the word which is their guide. Vers. 8, 9.

B. C. 1451.]

LESSON II.

[July 8.]

PASSING OVER JORDAN.—Josh. 3. 5-17.

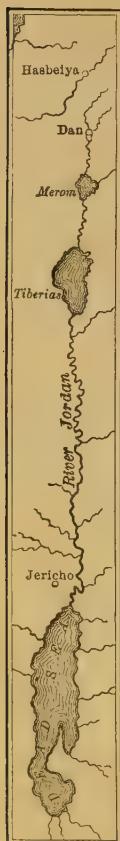
GOLDEN TEXT.—When thou passest through the waters, I will be with thee; and through the rivers, they shall not overflow thee.—ISA. 43. 2.

TIME.—B. C. 1451.

PLACE.—The Jordan, near the head of the Dead Sea.

CONNECTING LINKS.—(1) The orders of Joshua, preparatory to crossing the Jordan. Josh. 1. 10-18. (2) The two spies sent to Jericho. Josh. 2. 1-24.

INTRODUCTION.—Immediately after the return of the spies, or possibly before this event, the Israelites leave their long-occupied camp at Shittim, and move to the banks of the Jordan. A nation moving toward a swollen and angry river with perfect confidence that they should cross it, and yet in perfect ignorance of the manner of such an achievement, is a spectacle of thrilling moral sublimity. Thus marched Moses with the Hebrew people to the Red Sea.—*D. Steele. The Jordan.*—In the poetic language of Tacitus, "The Lebanon nourishes and pours out the Jordan." It flows entire through the first and second lake, and is retained by the third. These lakes (each with a triple name) are the Merom of the Old Testament, called Sanochonitis in ancient classics, and Huleh in modern geography; the second the Sea of Galilee, or Lake of Gennesaret, called also Tiberias; the third lake is the Dead Sea, called in the Old Testament the Salt Sea and the Sea of the Plain. The river, which in most of its course flows in a deep trench, is at the Dead Sea 1,308 feet below the level of the Mediterranean. The general course of its current is to the south, but the river has a number of sharp bends, which deflect the regular flow of its waters. From the rapidity of the flow it may be styled almost a continuous cataract. From the first lake to the second, a distance of nine miles, is a descent of six hundred feet; and from the Lake of Tiberias to the Dead Sea are twenty-seven great rapids, besides a great many of less magnitude. The average descent through its whole course is nearly twelve feet in a mile, justifying the name of "the Descender." Its length is about two hundred miles from the roots of Anti-Lebanon, where it bursts forth in all its purity, to the Sea of Salt, where it is lost in a briny, seething caldron. Yet the distance by a straight line between these points is less than ninety miles. There are shallows where it can be forded. It is subject to periodical overflows when the snows of Lebanon melt. At these times it overflows the first of the two terraces which constitute its banks. Within its lowest banks it varies in width from seventy feet, where it enters the Sea of Galilee, to one hundred and eighty yards at the Dead Sea.—*D. Steele.* The young Jordan! Type of this strange life of ours! Bright and beautiful in its cradle, laughing in its merry morning way through the flowery fields of the Huleh; plunging, with the recklessness of youth, into the tangled brakes and muddy marshes of Merom; hurrying thence, full-grown, like earnest manhood with its noisy and bustling activities, it subsides at length into life's sober midday in the placid Lake of Gennesaret. When it goes forth again it is down the inevitable declivity of old age, sinking deeper and deeper, in spite of doublings and windings innumerable, until finally lost in the bitter sea of Death, that melancholy bourne from which there is neither escape nor return.—*W. M. Thomson.*



5 And Josh'u-a said unto the people, Sanctify ¹yourself: for to-morrow the LORD will do wonders among you.

6 And Josh'u-a spake unto the priests,

¹ Exod. 19, 10; Lev. 20, 7; Num. 11, 18; chap.

5. **Sanctify yourselves**—By sacred ablutions and observances, and by a change of raiment where the washing of the raiment was impracticable. Compare the marginal references.—*D.*

saying, ²Take up the ark of the covenant, and pass over before the people. And they took up the ask of the covenant, and went before the people.

7, 13; 1 Sam. 16, 5; Joel 2, 16.—² Num. 4, 15.

ders to the priests, as also that to the people in verse 5, shows that Joshua had already been fully instructed as to what was to take place.—*Speaker's Commentary.* To the priests—On



River Jordan.

Steele. It consisted in spiritual purification also, that is, in turning the heart to God, in faith and trust in his promise, and in willing obedience to his commandments, that they should lay to heart in a proper way the miracle of grace which the Lord was about to work in the midst of them and on their behalf on the following day.—*Keil and Delitzsch.* **The Lord will do wonders**—The miracle of the Red Sea was a *wonder*, whose name had been noised abroad for forty years, (chap. 2, 10,) and this at the Jordan was to be like it.—*D. Steele.* *Why was this miracle wrought?* Three reasons may be gathered from the sacred narrative: (1) It constituted an evidence to the Israelites that God had chosen Joshua to lead them, Josh. 3, 8; (2) It convinced them that God was still favorable, and gave them courage to attempt the conquest of nations mightier than themselves, Josh. 3, 10; (3) It inspired the Canaanites with such extreme fear as unfitted them for the best defense.—*F. Johnson.*

6. **Joshua spake**—The issuing of these or-

ordinary occasions, the Levites of the house of Kohath, by special command, bore the ark. But when removed from within the veil, or when borne on festive occasions of extraordinary interest, the priests, the offspring of Aaron, were the bearers.—*D. Steele.* **Take up the ark**—This was a chest made of shittim or acacia wood, four feet in length, and two and one third feet in breadth and depth. It was overlaid with gold within and without. The cover, which was edged with gold, was called the mercy-seat. Standing on this lid were the cherubim with outstretched wings. The ark was borne upon the shoulders by means of rods passing through two rings on each of the two sides. When transported, it was enveloped in the veil of the dismantled tabernacle, the curtain of badger skins, and the blue cloth, (Num. 4, 5, 6,) and was therefore not seen. [In this respect the subjoined cut is inaccurate.] Its name is derived from its chief contents: the "covenant of Sinai," the two tables of stone, on which was the Decalogue written by the finger of God.

7 And the LORD said unto Josh'u-a, This day will I begin to magnify ³ thee in the sight of all Is-ra-el, that they may know that, as I was with Mo'ses, so I will be with thee.

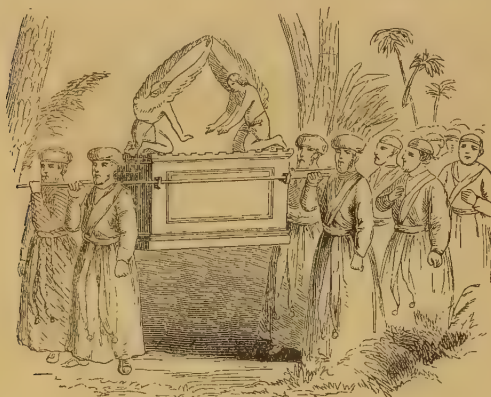
³ Chap. 4. 14; 1 Chron.

From Heb. 9. 4 we learn that it contained also "the pot of manna," and "Aaron's rod that budded." It was never seen save by the high-

8 And thou shalt command the priests that bear the ark of the covenant, saying, When ye are come to the brink of the water of Jor'dan, ye shall stand still in Jor'dan.

^{29. 25; 2 Chron. 1. 1.}

fiance of the enemies of Israel was thus given, who were challenged to attack the unarmed priests, or to attempt to seize the unattended ark.—*Scott.*



Ark and Priests.

priest, thus symbolizing the invisible Jehovah.

—*D. Steele.* Pass over—To the front of the host. Before the people—That ark which before was as the heart is now as the head; it was in the midst of Israel while they camped in the desert; now, when the cloud is removed, it is in front of the army; that, as before they depended upon it for life, so now they should for direction.—*Bishop Hall.* The distance which the people were to keep in the rear of the ark was nearly a mile, (chap. 3. 4;) had they crowded too near the ark the view would have been intercepted, and this intervening space, therefore, was ordered, that the chest containing the sacred symbols might be distinctly visible to all parts of the camp, and be recognized as their guide in the untrodden way.—*J. F. B.* They took up the ark—A statement which is, according to the rules of modern composition, brought in before its proper place, which would naturally be between verses 13 and 14. For the message from God to Joshua, and the address of the latter, must have been given before the priests moved. But this is the manner of the Hebrew historians, who often thus mention the fulfillment of a prophecy or the execution of a command in the immediate connection.—*D. Scott.* Went before the people—A noble de-

7. This day will I begin—This was only the *beginning* of a glorious succession of miracles attesting the divine commission of Joshua. Jehovah pledges to make Joshua great in the estimation of the people, and thus secure to him their promised loyalty and obedience.—*D. Steele.* To magnify thee—Whom the Lord makes great, he is truly great as once Moses and Joshua.—*F. R. Fay.* In the sight of all Israel—He was to be the visible instrument of working a mighty miracle in the eyes of the nation, and from his circumstantially foretelling how the waters should be cut off as soon as the feet of the priests should touch them, (verse 13,) it was demon-

strated that the secret of the Lord was with him.—*G. Bush.* I will be with thee—The assurance of the continued presence and protection of Jehovah afforded by the drying up of Jordan were exactly what was needed to encourage their fainting hearts, and secure for Joshua, accredited by so mighty a sign, the loyal allegiance of the people.—*E. Venables.*

Some have observed, it was at the banks of Jordan that God began to magnify Joshua, and at the same place he began to magnify our Lord Jesus as Mediator; for John was baptizing at Bethabara, the *house of passage*, and there it was that, when our Saviour was baptized, it was proclaimed concerning him, *This is my beloved Son.*—*M. Henry.*

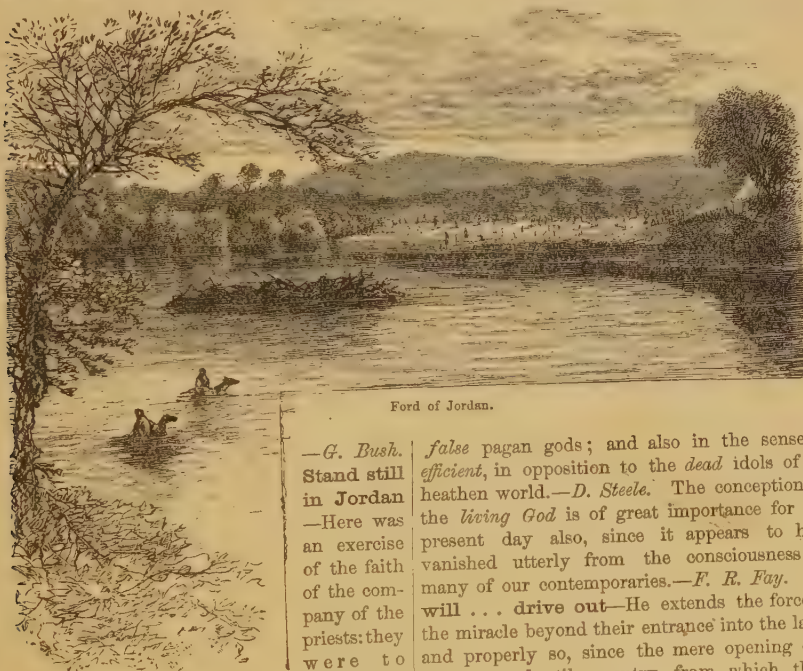
8. Command the priests—God could have divided the river without the priests, but they could not without him. The priests must herein set a good example to the people, and teach them to do their utmost in the service of God, and trust him for help in time of need.—*M. Henry.* Come to the brink—They were first required to pause on the brink of the stream, till the channel was laid dry, and then they seem to have advanced and taken their station in the midst of it till all the people had passed over.

9 And Josh'u-a said unto the children of Is'ra-el, Come hither, and hear the words of the LORD your God.

10 And Josh'u-a said, Hereby ye shall know that the 'living God is among you, and *that* he will without fail drive out from before you the Ca'naan-

⁴Deut. 5. 26; 1 Sam. 17. 26; 2 Kings 19. 4; Hosea 1. 10; Matt.

¹⁶ 16; 1 Thess. 1. 9.—⁵Exod. 33. 2; Deut. 7. 1; Ps. 44. 2.



Ford of Jordan.

—G. Bush. Stand still in Jordan—Here was an exercise of the faith of the company of the priests: they were to

false pagan gods; and also in the sense of efficient, in opposition to the dead idols of the heathen world.—D. Steele. The conception of the living God is of great importance to the present day also, since it appears to have vanished utterly from the consciousness of many of our contemporaries.—F. R. Fay. He will . . . drive out—He extends the force of the miracle beyond their entrance into the land, and properly so, since the mere opening of a way into a hostile country, from which there could be no retreat, would be nothing but exposure to death. For they would either easily fall, through being entangled in difficulties and in an unknown region, or they would perish through want. Joshua, therefore, foretold that when God drove back the river it would be as if he had stretched out his hand to strike all the inhabitants of the land, and that the proof which he gave of his power in their crossing the Jordan would be a certain presage of victory to be gained over all the tribes.—Keil. If Jordan's flood cannot keep them out, Canaan's force cannot turn them out again.—M. Henry. The Canaanites were, strictly speaking, the lowlanders who inhabited the lower tracts of Palestine, on the sea-coast and western bank of the Jordan. Num. 13. 29. But this term is often used in a wider sense, including all the tribes west of the Jordan and in Phenicia deriving their descent from Canaan. Gen. 10. 15-18.

stand still, bearing the ark on their shoulders, in the midst of Jordan, till all the people were passed over. And here was a foreshadowing of Christ's promise that the Ark of his Church should remain unharmed even unto the end, and that none of the powers of the enemy shall prevail against it. Matt. 16. 18.—C. Wordsworth.

9. And Joshua said—The objection urged against these addresses to the children of Israel by Moses and by Joshua, that it was a physical impossibility for so vast an encampment to hear the words of one speaker, falls to the ground when we reflect that all the people were addressed, not personally *en masse*, but representatively, as specified verse 2 and chap. 1. 10, 16, through the heads and officers of their tribes.—D. Steele.

10. The living God is among you—The adjective *living* is here and elsewhere applied to God in the sense *of true*, in opposition to the

ites, and the Hit'tites, and the Hi'vites, and the Per'iz-zites, and the Ger'ga-shites, and the Am'o-rites, and the Jeb'u-sites.

Psa. 24. 1; Job 41. 11;

Hittites—Or, *Chittites*. Of these Abraham purchased Machpelah, (Gen. 23. 10,) and among

11 Behold, the ark of the covenant of the Lord of all the earth passeth over before you into Jor'dan.

Micah 4. 13; Zech. 4. 14; 6. 5.

civil life, and such as have from the earliest times possessed the most flourishing inland cities.—

D. Steele. **Perizzites**—Hebrew, *rustics* or *countrymen*. They inhabited the mountainous regions subsequently allotted to Judah and Ephraim, a part of which was afterward called Samaria, Chap. 11. 13; 17. 15. They were engaged in agricultural pursuits. Hence, in a wider sense, the term "Perizzites" sometimes includes all the agricultural Canaanites, in distinction from those engaged in trade and commerce.—*D. Steele.* **Girgashites**—The residence of this tribe is not distinctly specified in the Old Testament. Eusebius affirms that they dwelt east of the Jordan, and many writers incline to locate them east of Lake Gennesaret. For here, according to Matt. 8. 18, lay "the country of the *Gergesenes*," identical with the name of this tribe, as given in the Septuagint and Vulgate versions.—*M. S. Terry.* The **Amorites** were the most powerful and distinguished of the Canaanitish nations, and occupied a tract on both sides of the Jordan. Those on the east side were under two kings, *Sihon* and *Og*. The former refused passage to the Hebrews through his territory, came to Jahaz, fought, and was defeated. Og also gave battle at Edrei, and was totally routed.—*D. Steele.* The **Jebusites** inhabited the city and neighboring mountains of *Jebus*—ancient Jerusalem. They were not expelled from the city till the time of David. 2 Sam. 5. 6, 8.—*D. Steele.*

By what do we also recognize the presence of a living God among us? (1) By his word, which he still causes to be perpetually published among us. (2) By his deeds which he is still perpetually performing. The living God! Ver. 10. How should we think of God? (1) Not as a rigid order of nature, but (2) as the living God and the ruler over all the earth. The ruler over all the world: (1) The mightiest, (2) the best ruler.—*F. R. Fay.*

11. The ark of the covenant of the Lord—The original will admit of being rendered, The ark of the covenant, *even* the Lord of all



them Esau married two wives. Gen. 26. 34. **Hivites**—Ewald explains it as *midlanders*, and supposed that "they loved peaceful occupations and trading pursuits in well-ordered communities and fortified cities, and located themselves principally in districts the most suitable for peaceful

12 Now therefore ⁷take you twelve men out of the tribes of Is'ra-el, out of every tribe a man.

13 And it shall come to pass, as soon as the soles of the feet of the priests that bear the ark of the LORD, the Lord of all the earth, shall rest in the waters of Jor'dan, *that* the waters of Jordan shall be cut off *from* the waters that come down from above; and they ⁸shall stand upon an heap.

⁷ Chap. 4. 2.—⁸ Psa. 79. 13; 114. 3.—⁹ Exod. 25. 10; 26. 30; Num. 10. 8; 2 Chron. 6. 41; Psa. 182. 8; Acts 7. 45; Heb. 9. 4.

the earth; and as the Hebrew accents favor this sense, it is adopted by many of the Jewish commentators, although the current of versions is against it.—*G. Bush.* **Lord of all the earth**—This claim of universal dominion for Jehovah, in contrast with the limited sway of the local gods of the pagans, not only enthrones Jehovah over all nations, but also over the forces of the material world. Perhaps no miracle of Jesus inspired such overwhelming awe in his disciples as his control of the winds and the waves.—*D. Steele.* **Passeth over before you**—The ark of the covenant went (was carried) before the people into the river, and then stood still, as the bulwark of the people, till the passage was completed; so that the word "before" indicates the protection which it would afford.—*Keil.*

12. Now . . . take you twelve men—Emphasis is put on *now*. The election of these twelve men is to take place immediately, not after they cross the Jordan. The purpose for which they are selected is shown in chap. 4. 4, 5, where it will be seen that a visible memorial of this miracle is provided for before it takes place. The men were designated at this time because they could not be elected while the people were crossing, and afterward there would be too little time. Hence the assumption of some that this verse is brought in by mistake, being disconnected from the succeeding chapter, is utterly groundless. The men are mentioned before the moving of the ark because they were chosen then.—*D. Steele.*

13. The waters of Jordan shall be cut off—It is better to omit *from*, and substitute *namely*, and render, *The waters of Jordan shall be cut off, namely, the waters that come down from above.*—*D. Steele.* **Stand upon a heap**—Or, *stand up one mass*—We take the meaning to be that just above the crossing the waters were "congealed," or solidified, as if dammed up by an invisible perpendicular wall across the channel, causing the waters above to overflow all the

14 And it came to pass, when the people removed from their tents, to pass over Jor'dan, and the priests bearing the ⁹ark of the covenant before the people;

15 And as they that bare the ark were come unto Jor'dan, and the feet of the priests that bare the ark were dipped in the brim of the water, (for ¹⁰Jor'dan overfloweth ¹¹all his banks ¹²all the time of harvest,)

¹⁰ 1 Chron. 12. 15; Jer. 12. 5; 49. 19.—¹¹ *α* Occasioned by the melting of the snow on Lebanon.—¹² Chap. 4. 18; 5. 10, 12.

banks. Below the miraculous dam the channel ran dry to the Dead Sea.—*D. D. Whedon.*

14. Removed from their tents—The original expression means primarily to *pull up*, and it is used with reference to tent-pins, which are pulled up when a tent is to be moved. It very naturally came to be used with reference to the breaking up of the encampment preparatory to departure, since the first step of the process was the pulling up of the tent-pins.—*F. Johnson.* **The priests bearing the ark . . . before**—There was a space between the ark and the people of about three quarters of a mile, so that all could see the sacred symbol of the divine presence. Had the multitudes crowded about it those at a little distance could not have kept it in sight.—*F. Johnson.*

15. They that bare the ark—The ark was the symbol of Jehovah's presence, his peculiar dwelling-place. It contained the expression of his will graven upon stones. The priests who bore it were his special ministers. It was therefore as if the water had stayed at the footsteps of Jehovah himself. The occurrence of the event at the very moment when the feet of the priests touched the water, rendered its miraculous character unmistakable.—*F. Johnson.* **Overfloweth all his banks**—The river may be said to have three sets of banks, namely, the upper or outer ones, forming the first descent from the level of the great valley; the lower or middle ones, inclosing the tract of canes and other vegetation; and the actual banks of the channel.—*W. Robinson.* **At the time of harvest**—The Jordan is made up from the joint contributions of great permanent springs, and in this fact we find the explanation of the overflow of the river so late in the season as March. These immense fountains do not feel the effects of the early winter rains at all. It requires the heavy and long-continued storms of midwinter before they are moved in the least; and it is not until toward the close of winter, when the melt-

16 That the waters which came down from above stood *and* rose up upon an heap very far from the city Ad'am, that *is* beside ¹² Zar'e-tan: and those

¹²1 Kings 4. 12; 7. 46.—¹³ Deut. 3. 17.

ing snows of Hermon and Lebanon, with the heavy rains of the season, have penetrated through the mighty masses of these mountains, and filled to overflowing their hidden chambers and vast reservoirs, that the streams gush forth in their full volume. The Huleh—marsh and lake—is filled, and the Gennesaret rises and pours its accumulated waters into the swelling Jordan about the first of March. Thus it comes to pass that it does actually “overflow all its

that came down toward ¹³ the sea of the plain, *even* the ¹⁴ salt sea, failed, *and* were cut off: and the people passed over right against Jer'i-cho.

¹⁴ Gen. 14. 3; Deut. 3. 17; Num. 34. 3.

disappeared, the river must, from a greater accession of water, have been broader still than at harvest time in the present day.—*J. F. B.* This season of high water was wisely chosen for (1) The miracle was the more stupendous and impressive to the Israelites; (2) It inspired their enemies with greater terror; (3) Those enemies, had the crossing been attempted when the water was low, would have appeared upon the opposite shores to annoy the Israelites. Even if the



The Dead Sea.

banks during all the time of harvest;” nor does it soon subside, as other short rivers do, when the rains cease. These fountains continue to pour forth their contributions for months with undiminished volume, and the river keeps full and strong all through March into April, and the proper banks of the river are still full to overflowing in the time of harvest.—*W. M. Thomson.* In ancient times, when the hills on the right and left were much more drenched with rain and snow than since the forests have

water had been dried up at such a season they could have inflicted great damage, and then, if necessary, have retired to Jericho unharmed.—*F. Johnson.*

16. The waters . . . stood and rose up—So deep is the depression through which the Jordan flows from the Lake of Galilee to the probable site of this miracle, that the arrest and upheaving of its waters for many hours would not cause extensive overflowing of the adjacent country.—*F. Johnson.* Very far from the

17 And the priests that bare the ark of the covenant of the LORD stood firm on dry ground in the midst of Jor'dan,

18 Exod.

city Adam—There is in the Hebrew a marginal reading which is generally preferred by the critics: "The waters stood and rose up upon one heap very far off—by Adam, the city that is by the side of Zarthan."—*D. Steele*. Beside Zaretan—Zaretan is no doubt identical with the Zarathan of 1 Kings 7. 46, where all the brazen vessels of the temple were cast in the plain of the Jordan, in the clay ground between Succoth and Zarthan. Succoth lay on the eastern bank of the Jordan, not far from Beisan or Bethshean; and accordingly Van de Velde identifies Zaretan with Surtabeh, on the western bank, a peculiar mountain group in the Ghor, south of Wady-el-Feirah, on the highest peak of which, called Kurn-el-Surtabeyh, he found the ruins of an ancient castle, probably the citadel of the proper town of Zarthan, which must have been at its base. The city Adam he supposes to have stood between the mountain and the Jordan, where large hewn stones are found scattered about, but the name of the city has not been preserved.—*F. Smith*. The distance of Kurn Surtabeh from Jericho is a little more than fifteen miles, which tallies very well with the expression "very far."—*Keil*. The sea of the plain—Known now, though never in the Scriptures, as the Dead Sea, into which the Jordan flows. It is called the Salt Sea, (Deut. 3. 17) on account of the intense saltiness of its water, which contains twenty-six per cent. of saline properties, so that the human body floats upon it like a cork. It is forty-six miles long and ten broad. The Jordan and several minor streams flow into it, but it has no visible outlet, the evaporation from its surface, ever sultry, carrying off its waters.—*F. Johnson*. The people passed over—It is probable that the people crossed the river at what was afterward called Bethabara, or *house of passage*, which seems to have derived its name from this very circumstance. It was here that John baptized, (John-1. 28,) and that Jesus, as well as Joshua, began to be magnified.—*G. Bush*. The crossing would be accomplished much more quickly than that of the Red Sea, for the Jordan was but a few rods wide; the people hastened to cross, (Josh. 4. 10,) and as the water left all its bed bare, both above and below, far as the eye could reach, the people could spread widely, not forming a very lengthy col-

umn.—*F. Johnson*. Right against Jericho—

14. 29.

Here God carried them over because this part was, (1) The strongest, as having in its neighborhood an eminent city, a potent king, and a stout and warlike people. (2) The most pleasant and fruitful, and, therefore, more convenient both for the refreshment of the Israelites after their long and tedious marches, and for their encouragement to their present expedition.—*M. Pool*.



The waters which would have obstructed our passage to Canaan, and which would have overflowed us if God had not checked them, have been checked for us in Adam; the stream of sin and death which was coming down upon us from Adam to destroy us, was checked at the baptism of our divine Joshua in the Jordan when he sanctified water to the washing away of sins, whereby "the old Adam is buried in us, and the new man is raised up in us." Those waters which would have impeded our course to heaven, and would have drowned us in destruction, have been driven back and flxed far off in Adam.—*C. Wordsworth*.

17. The priests . . . stood firm—Stood fixedly and immovably in the same place and posture, neither pressed upon by the waters, nor sinking in the mire, nor shifting their position. It is probable, too, that they continued bearing the ark on their shoulders during the whole time of their standing.—*G. Bush*. Dry ground—Not hard and dusty ground, but dry only in the sense of being drained of water.—*D. Steele*. All the people were passed clean over—The Jordan is now passed, and Canaan is attained! Their departure from Egypt and their arrival in Canaan are signaled by parallel miracles of sea and river. Both at their exit and at their entrance Jehovah leads them through a watery gate, by cleaving the waves asunder.—*D. Steele*.

When, in the fourth century of the Christian era, the Goths, amounting to nearly a million of persons of both sexes and of all ages, crossed the Danube, which had been swelled by incessant rains, a large fleet of vessels, of boats, and of canoes was provided, yet many days and nights they passed and repassed with indefatigable toil, and, notwithstanding the most strenuous

efforts of the officers, many were swept away and drowned by the rapid violence of the current. But here were two millions of people, who, in some way or other, must be transported to the opposite banks of the river which was before them. It is evident, then, that God must interfere on their behalf.—*F. Smith.*

The tribes, obedient, move;

The priests bear on the ark to Jordan's strand;
When lo! the waters rushing from above,
Heaped up and moveless stand!

While, failing more and more,

The floods that downward flow subside and die,
And Israel finds to Canaan's promised shore
A passage safe and dry!

So o'er this mortal scene

Heavenward let us still follow Christ our Ark!
Nor stand dismayed, though Jordan roll between
His waters deep and dark.

For while, with trusting heart,

We look to him, our Guardian and our Guide,
The swelling waters of that flood shall part,
And more and more subside.

As nearer draws the hour

That sees at last our pilgrim-wanderings cease,
Its terrors more and more shall lose their power,
Till all is joy and peace!—*Small.*

Authorities to be Consulted.

Smith's Old Testament History, 250. Milman's History of the Jews, vol. 1, book v. J. Smith's Joshua and his Times, chap. iv. Ewald's History of Israel, vol. ii, p. 244. [For the various nations in Canaan, see Ewald, vol. i, p. 214.] Stems and Twigs, ii, 308. Bishop Hall's Contemplations. For descriptions of the

Jordan Valley, see Robinson's Physical Geography of Palestine, p. 78. Stanley's Sinai and Palestine, chap. ix. Tristram's Land of Israel, and Ridgaway's The Lord's Land. On the destruction of the Canaanites, see Introduction to the Book of Joshua in the Speaker's Commentary. See on this Lesson, the Sunday-School Journal, National Sunday-School Teacher, Sunday-School Times, etc., on the Lessons for 1875, 1st Quar., Lesson II, "Crossing the Jordan." Foster's Cyclopedia of Illustrations [Figures marked with a star refer to poetical quotations]—ver. 8: 3643; ver. 7: *5963; vers: 14-17; *8689, *8643.

Practical Root Thoughts.

[GOD'S WONDERS AMONG HIS PEOPLE.]

1. God's wonders demand holiness on the part of those for whom they are wrought. Ver. 5.

2. God's wonders are wrought by his presence among his people. Ver. 6.

3. God's wonders are wrought to give honor to his chosen leaders and workers. Ver. 7.

4. God's wonders reveal his presence as a living power among his people. Ver. 10.

5. God's wonders are a foretaste of terror and destruction to his enemies. Ver. 10.

6. God's wonders bring encouragement of triumph to his people. Ver. 10.

7. God's wonders demand faith and obedience among those for whom they are wrought. Vers. 13, 14.

8. God's wonders reveal a power above all natural law. Ver. 16.

B. C. 1451.]

LESSON III.

[July 15.]

THE PLAINS OF JERICO.—Joshua 5. 10-15; 6. 1-5.

GOLDEN TEXT.—By faith the walls of Jericho fell down, after they were compassed about seven days.—HEB. 11, 30.

TIME.—B. C. 1451.

PLACE.—The plain of the Jordan, near Jericho.

CONNECTING LINES.—(1) The memorial stones. Josh. 4. 1-24. (2) The circumcision of the Israelites. Josh. 5. 1-9.

INTRODUCTION.—The passage of the Jordan was not the end, but the beginning, of a long and troubled conflict. Of this the first step was the occupation of Gilgal. It became immediately the frontier fortress, such as the Romans, under the name of *colonia*, always planted as their advanced posts in a hostile country, such as at Kufa the Arab conquerors founded before the building of Bagdad, and at Fostat before the building of Cairo. It was also, as Josephus well says, the "place of freedom." There they cast off the slough of their wandering life. The uncircumcised state, regarded as a deep reproach by the higher civilization of the East, was now to be "rolled away." The ancient rite was performed once more, and the knives of flint used on the occasion were preserved as sacred relics.—*Dean Stanley. Palestine before the Conquest.*—Palestine was at this time governed by a multitude of petty, independent kings.



Plain of Jericho.

Since the time when the nomad patriarchs wandered over the land, and found wide pastures for their flocks and herds, a great, no doubt a slow, revolution had taken place in the state of the country. The agricultural had encroached on the pastoral life, the vine and olive had been extensively cultivated; strong walled cities, fenced cities, had arisen on the heights and in the plains; the Canaanites, manifestly a warlike people, had encountered, defended themselves against, or been compelled to subjection by the Egyptian conquerors. The kings with whom Jacob meets are heads of tribes; in the days of Joshua they are local sovereigns. These kings, it should seem, of different races—Canaanites, Hivites, Jebusites, and many others—were appalled by this sudden invasion, not of a hostile tribe in quest of plunder, or of a neighboring monarch with the design of reducing the country to a tributary province, but of a whole people advancing with the obvious and avowed intention of obtaining a permanent settlement.—*H. H. Milman. The city of Jericho.*—Jericho was the most, indeed the only, important town in the Jordan valley. Not only was it conspicuous among the other Canaanitish towns, for its walls and gates and its rich temple, filled with gold, silver, iron, brass, and even Mesopotamian drapery, but its situation was such as must always have rendered its occupation necessary to any invader from that quarter. It was the key of Western Palestine, as standing at the entrance of the two main passes into the central mountains. From the issues of the torrent of the Kelt on the south to the copious spring, afterward called "the fountain of Elisha," on the north, the ancient city ran along the base of the mountains, and thus commanded the oasis of the desert valley, the garden or park of verdure which, clustering round these waters, has, through the various stages of its long existence, secured its prosperity and grandeur.—*Dean Stanley.*

10 And the children of Is'ra-el encamped in Gil'gal, and kept the pass-over ¹on the fourteenth day of the

¹ Exod. 12, 6 ;

10. Encamped in Gilgal—Gilgal was on



rising ground, (cf. 5. 3,) "in the east border of Jericho," that is, (according to Josephus, *Ant.* v, 4,) near five miles from the river, and consequently about two from the city itself. Over the palm-trees from this elevated spot the walls and buildings of the city would be well seen. The site of the camp was no doubt fortified by Joshua, as it constituted for some time the abiding foothold in Canaan, whence he sallied forth to subdue the country, and was also the place of safety where the ark, and no doubt also the women, children, cattle, and other property of the people, were left. Hence the demolition of Jericho and Ai, strong fortresses in the neighborhood of Gilgal, was no doubt dictated by sound policy as well as by religious obligations.—*Speaker's Commentary.*

Kept the passover—This institution was in memory of their deliverance from the plague which had destroyed the firstborn in Egypt, (Exodus 12,) and was the second feast which had been observed since leaving that land of bondage. The first was at Sinai, in the second year of their journey in the desert. Num. 9. There was no observance of it in the desert subsequent to this on account of the rejection of Israel from the covenant.—*D. Steele.*

Fourteenth day of the month—The month

month at even in the plains of Jericho.

11 And they did eat of the old corn

Num. 9, 5.

Abib, or Nisan, corresponding to parts of March and April. All the great movements of the ancient Church of God were begun with *eating the Passover*. The Israelites ate the Passover, and went forth from Egypt and crossed the Red Sea. They ate the Passover at Sinai, when the Tabernacle had been raised, and set forth on their march toward Canaan, (see Num. 10. 11;) and now they eat the Passover under Joshua, and begin their march of victory.—*C. Wordsworth.*

Plains of Jericho—Jericho stands at the extremity of a plain which slopes to the Jordan, encircled on every side by an amphitheater of hills, which almost overhang it with their precipitous cliffs.—*H. H. Milman.*

When soldiers take the field they are apt to think themselves excused from religious exercises, (they have not time or thought to attend them,) yet Joshua opens the campaign with one act of devotion after another.—*M. Henry.*

11. Did eat of the old corn—Corn here refers to any kind of grain. There is no authority in the Hebrew for the word *old*. They ate of the *produce* of the land.—*D. Steele.*

Of the land—This they probably found in abundance in the deserted granaries of the inhabitants, who had fled away and betaken themselves for safety to the defended city of Jericho.—*G. Bush.*

The plains of Jericho are exceedingly fertile; and, according to Dr. Robinson, the wheat harvest is not completed until about the thirteenth of May. Doubtless, then, abundance of corn was still standing in the neighborhood of G:

of the land on the morrow after the passover, unleavened cakes, and parched corn in the self-same day.

12 And the manna ceased on the morrow after they had eaten of the old corn of the land; neither had the children of Is'ra-el manna any more; but they did eat of the fruit of the land of Ca'naan that year.

²Gen. 18. 2; Exod. 23. 23; Zech. 1. 8; Acts 1. 10.

gal, and thus were the necessities of the people met.—*T. Smith.* **Unleavened cakes**, in the evening of the passover, and the grain of the land on the following morning, the same day according to Hebrew reckoning. **Parched corn**—Parched corn is much used in the East, and, mixed with honey, butter, or spices, is greatly relished.—*T. Smith.*

Tristram saw the method of preparation among the Arabs: "A few sheaves of wheat were tossed over on the fire, and as soon as the straw was consumed the charred heads were dexterously swept from the embers on a cloak spread on the ground. The women of the party then beat the ears and tossed them into the air until they were thoroughly winnowed, when the wheat was eaten without further preparation. . . . The green ears had become half charred by roasting, and there was a pleasant mingling of milky wheat and a fresh crust flavor as we chewed the parched corn."—*F. Johnson.*

12. **The manna**—It is described in Exod. 16. 14-36. It fell upon the encampment six times each week during forty years. As each man had an omer—three quarts—a day, there must have been fifteen million pounds a week.—*D. Steele.* We are not to understand from these passages that manna was the only food of the Israelites during their sojourn in the wilderness; quails were sometimes sent, and there can be little doubt that they were able to procure many other kinds of food. Manna, then, was the extra supply; and, miraculous in its nature, it continued to fall in greater or less quantities, as it was required, until, now that the people had come into a land inhabited, it definitely ceased.—*T. Smith.* **Ceased on the morrow**—Now that Israel is brought to the brim of Canaan, the cloud is vanished, which led them all the way, and as soon as they have but crossed Jordan the manna ceaseth which nourished them all the way. The cloud and manna were for their passage, not for their rest; for the wilderness, not for Canaan.—*C. Wordsworth.*

13 And it came to pass, when Josh'u-a was by Jer'i-cho, that he lifted up his eyes and looked, and, behold, there stood ²a man over against him with his sword drawn in his hand: and Josh'u-a went unto him, and said unto him, *Art* thou for us, or for our adversaries?

14 And he said, Nay; but *as* ^aCaptain

a Or, prince, Dan. 10. 13; 12. 1; Rev. 12. 7.

God would not have us expect extraordinary or miraculous supplies when they may be procured by ordinary means.—*G. Bush.*

The word and ordinances of God are spiritual manna, with which God nourishes his people in this wilderness, and, though often forfeited, yet they are continued while we are here; but when we come to the heavenly Canaan, this manna will cease, for we no longer have need of it.—*M. Henry.*

13. **Joshua was by Jericho**—Literally, *In Jericho*. The Hebrew word expressing immediate proximity, the entrance as it were into some other object, that is to say, inside it in thought, meditating upon the conquest of it.—*Keil.* Joshua was in his post as general when God came and made himself known to him as Generalissimo.—*G. R. Bliss.* **There stood a man**—The appearance was that of God manifested in the person of his word. Hence the command of verse 15. That the appearance was not in a vision merely is clear from the fact that Joshua "went unto him" and addressed him.—*Speaker's Commentary.* **With a drawn sword**—The drawn sword contained in itself this practical explanation: "I am now come with my heavenly army to make war upon the Canaanites, and to assist thee and thy people."—*Seb. Schmidt.* The sword is a symbol of high executive power. The drawn sword intimates that that power is to be immediately exercised. Hence Joshua's anxiety to know in whose behalf the mysterious stranger has drawn his sword.—*D. Steele.* **Joshua went unto him**—Here is a remarkable display of courage on the part of Joshua. Good men, because of their faith in God, confront danger without fear.—*D. Steele.* **Art thou**—The question was appropriate for the military leader of the Israelites.—*Knobel.* That the stranger had come to make war, either for or against Israel, Joshua at once understood from the drawn sword, the symbol of hostilities to be immediately commenced.—*F. Johnson.*

14. **Nay; but as captain**—The Divine person intimates that he, the prince of the angels,

of the host of the LORD am I now come. And Josh'u-a fell ³ on his face to the earth, and did worship, and said unto him, What saith my Lord unto his servant?

³ Gen. 17. 3. — ⁴ Exod. 3. 5; 19. 10, 13; Lev. 19. 2; 1 Sam. 2. 2; 96. 4, 9; 99. 5; Isa. 6. 3;

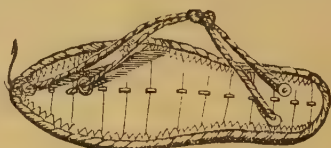
had come to lead Israel in the coming strife and to overthrow by heavenly might the armies and the strongholds of God's and Israel's enemies. Accordingly, the captain of Jericho and the destruction of the Canaanites generally form a fit type of a grander and more complete conquest and excision of the powers of evil which yet waits accomplishment. — *Speaker's Commentary.* **Of the host of the Lord** — By the host or army of the Lord we are not to understand, as some have done, the Israelites, for they are never called *the* army, or *the* host of the Lord. The army of the Lord is the heavenly host, whence the Lord is called *Jehovah Sabaoth* or *the Lord of hosts*. — *T. Smith.* That "the captain of the host of the Lord" was not a created angel is evident from (1) Joshua receiving from him the same command, to remove his shoes, given to Moses by Jehovah; (2) his being called Jehovah, (chap. 6. 2;) and (3) his attributing to himself the delivery of Jericho into Joshua's hand: "See I have given into thy hand Jericho." That we have here a manifestation of the Divine Word, the second person of the Trinity, was the opinion of the early Jewish Church, and has been held by many of the Christian fathers; for example, Justin Martyr, Eusebius, and Origen. — *E. Venables.* **Am I now come** — Invisibly he had been with the Israelites in all their wanderings, but now that a decisive blow was to be struck, he appeared to Joshua in the form of a man to reassure him of his presence, and to encourage him in the prosecution of his task. — *T. Smith.* **Joshua fell . . . to the earth** — The word which is connected with the falling down does not always mean divine worship, but very frequently mean nothing more than the deep Oriental reverence paid by a dependent to his superior or king (for example, 2 Sam. 9. 6; 14. 32.) and Joshua did not address the person who appeared to him by the name of God, but simply as "my Lord." In any case, however, Joshua regarded him at once as a superior being, that is, an angel. — *Keil.* **What saith my Lord** — Joshua owns himself an inferior officer, and stands to receive orders; this temper of mind shows him fit for the post he was in, for those know best

15 And the captain of the LORD's host said unto Josh'u-a, 'Loose thy shoe from off thy foot; for the place wheron thou standest *is* holy. And Josh'u-a did so.

1 Chron. 16. 25, 29; Psa. 22. 3; 29. 2; 33. 8; 76. 7, 11; 89. 7; Acts 7. 33; Rev. 4. 8; 15. 4.

how to command that know how to obey. — *M. Henry.*

15. Said unto Joshua — Instead of reproving Joshua for doing him too much honor, he commands him to do still more by "loosing his shoes from off his feet;" thus insisting upon the highest acknowledgment of the Divine presence which was in use among the eastern nations. — *G. Bush.* **Loose thy shoe** — A command which would remind him of the appearance of God to Moses in the burning bush, and which implied that the person who now appeared was the very person who had revealed himself to Moses as the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. — *Keil.* **From off thy foot** — The shoe was a



Sandal.

light sandal, covering the sole of the foot only. The direction was in conformity with a usage which was well known; for it is observed in all eastern countries, where the people take off their shoes or sandals as we do our hats. But the Eastern idea is not precisely the same as the Western. With us the removal of the hat is an expression of reverence for the place we enter, or rather of Him who is worshiped there. With them the removal of the shoes is a confession of personal defilement and conscious unworthiness to stand in the presence of unspotted holiness. The symbolism is obvious; the shoes are defiled with the earth. — *R. Jamieson.* **The place . . . is holy** — It was for the time made holy, or consecrated by the divine presence. As soon as that was withdrawn, its peculiar sacredness also forsook it, and it was no more holy than any other place. Yet with the pious heart there will naturally be, from the laws of association, a feeling of reverence for any place where God has been pleased to vouchsafe the special manifestation of himself. Such a sentiment, however, should be guarded from degenerating into superstition. — *G. Bush.*

1 Now Jer'i-cho ^b was straitly shut up because of the children of Is'-ra-el: none went out, and none came in.

2 And the LORD said unto Josh'u-a, See, ^cI have given unto thine hand Jer'i-cho, and the king thereof, and the mighty men of valor.

3 And ye shall compass the city,

^b Did shut up, and was shut up.

1. Now—This verse is strictly parenthetical. It is inserted to explain the declaration which follows in verse 2. — *Speaker's Commentary*. Jericho was straitly shut up—Heb., *Shutting* (the gates) and firmly shut up. The active participle may describe the act of the people within, and the passive that of the besiegers without. Or the sense may be: Jericho closed her gates, and fastened them up with bolts and bars.—*D. Steele*.

Every carnal heart is a Jericho shut up; God sits down before it, and displays mercy and judgment in sight of the walls thereof; it hardens itself in a willful security, and saith, "Tush, I shall never be moved."—*Bishop Hall*.

2. The Lord said—The captain of the Lord's host, who is still speaking in these verses. I have given—Let it be remembered that the Israelites were altogether unschooled in the art of war, as far as it is concerned in carrying on the siege of fortified towns. They had either been born in the wilderness, or had not attained man's estate before they had left Egypt. —*C. Wordsworth*. Joshua had been wondering how he was to take the city, walled as it was and straitly shut up, and had perhaps been devising some plan of his own, when he was thus informed that God himself would interfere miraculously, and that neither stratagem nor force would be required.—*T. Smith*. Jericho, and the king thereof—A city, in Scripture style, is often taken, not for a collection of houses and walls, but for the inhabitants, an assemblage of people dwelling together in a corporate capacity. —*G. Bush*. Mighty men of valor—Heroes of might. An appositive of Jericho and its being. Their warlike character is here attested by Jehovah.—*D. Steele*.

3. Ye shall compass the city—God orders them to make one circuit round the city daily, until the seventh day, on which they are told to go round it seven times, sounding the trumpets, and shouting. The whole looked like nothing more than child's play; and yet it was no improper test for trying their faith, as it proved their acquiescence in the divine message, even

all ye men of war, and go round about the city once. Thus shalt thou do six days.

4 And seven priests shall bear before the ark seven ^etrumpets of rams' horns: and the seventh day ye shall compass the city seven times, and ^fthe priests shall blow with the trumpets.

^c Chap. 2. 9.—^e Judg. 7. 16.—^f Num. 10. 8.

when they saw in the act itself nothing but mere disappointment. — *Calvin*. The procession is thus formed: It consists, first, of the armed men of the tribes of Reuben and Gad, and the half tribe of Manasseh; next, of the seven priests, with the rams' horns; then of the ark of the covenant borne by other priests; and lastly, of the whole of the warriors of the other nine tribes and a half. And, leaving the women, the aged, and the young upon the plain, it advances toward the high-walled town.—*T. Smith*. Thus shalt thou do six days—The time was thus lengthened out, both to afford a continued exercise of the faith and patience of the people, and that the besieged and besiegers might be the more deeply impressed with that supernatural power by which the result was to be accomplished.—*G. Bush*.

4. Shall bear before the ark—Here is a peculiar and unprecedented mode of reducing a walled town, to carry a small chest containing, not the enginery of death, but a few religious relics, attended by a band of priests "blowing on their trumpets," and followed by the whole army marching in procession. We may not assign with certainty the reason of this strange command, but we plainly see, at least, four objects attained: (1) The whole army is honored as a subordinate agent in the conquest of the city. (2) God, the efficient cause, is magnified before all men. (3) His ark and his ministers, by their prominence at the head of the procession, are especially honored in the eyes of Israelite and Canaanite. (4) A course of proceeding so unmilitary and apparently absurd was a severe test of the faith of the Israelites in Jehovah. *D. Steele*. Trumpets of rams' horns—The trumpets employed were not the silver trumpets used for signaling the marshaling of the host and for other warlike purposes, (cf. Num. 10. 2,) but the curved horns employed for ushering in the Jubilee and the Sabbatical year.—*Speaker's Commentary*. The best-supported etymology of *yobel*, the word translated *ram's horns*, is that which gives it the sense of a loud and startling sound, and hence we adopt the rendering

5 And it shall come to pass, that when they make a long *blast* with the ram's horn, *and* when ye hear the sound of the trumpet, all the people shall

shout with a great shout; and the wall of the city shall fall down *flat*, and the people shall ascend up every man straight before him.

c Under

it.

signal trumpet. In verse 5 occurs the expression *horn of yobel*, so that the words *trumpet*



Ancient Cornets.

(*shophar*) and *horn (keren)* are here used interchangeably. The common opinion is that the *shophar* was a long straight instrument, and the *keren* a crooked one. — *D. Steele.* **And the seventh day**—Most probably, as the Jewish writers assert, a Sabbath day. On this day it is noted that they “rose early about the dawning of the day.” This would be necessary in order to give time for encompassing the city seven times. Jericho appears, from all the notices of it in this book, to have been a city of considerable size and population; and each passage of the large host round it could hardly have taken less than an hour and a half. Thus, with the necessary intervals of rest, the evening would be at hand, when Joshua gave the signal to shout as described, (verse 16,) and the work of slaughter was probably commenced just as the hours of the Sabbath were passed.—*Speaker's Commentary.* **Blow with the trumpets**—If the blast of trumpets was the signal to the congregation of Israel of the gracious arrival of the Lord its God to enter into fellowship with it, no less did it proclaim the advent of judgment to an ungodly world.—*Keil and Delitzsch.*

5. **All the people shall shout**—This was a shout of faith; they believed that the walls of Jericho would fall, and by that faith they were thrown down. It was a shout of prayer, an echo to the sound of the trumpets which proclaimed the promise that God would remember them; with one accord, as one man, they cry to heaven for help, and help comes in.—*M. Henry.* **The walls of the city shall fall**—Never, perhaps, was a miracle more needed than that which gave Jericho to Joshua. Its lofty walls and well-fenced gates made it sim-

ply impregnable to the Israelites, a nomad people, reared in the desert, destitute alike of the engines of war for assaulting a fortified town, and of skill and experience in the use of them if it had had them. Nothing but a direct interference of the Almighty could in a week's time give a city like Jericho, thoroughly on its guard and prepared, (cf. 2, 9, sqq. and 6. 1,) to besiegers situated as were Joshua and the Jews.—*Speaker's Commentary.* **Ascend up, every man straight before him**—The moving column of men was so long that it completely encircled the city. When the wall fell there was a wall of soldiers surrounding it on every side. The command is that this living wall contract by each man's marching over the ruins toward the center of the city. Escape would be impossible.—*D. Steele.* The times which prepare for the close of God's present dispensation are signified in the days during which the people obeyed and waited, as the number of those days, seven, the number of perfection, represents that “fullness of time,” known only to God, at which his dispensation will culminate and close. Thus the circumstances which lead up to the fall of Jericho are an acted prophecy, as was that fall itself which sets forth the overthrow of all that resists the kingdom of which Christ is the head; and particularly the day of judgment, in which that overthrow will be fully and finally accomplished. Paul, indeed, in describing that day, seems to borrow his imagery from the very chapter before us when he says: “The Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trumpet of God.” 1 Thess. 4. 16.—*Speaker's Commentary.*

When pealed thy wild shout to the blue mantled sky,
How the foe-man shrunk back as he heard it pass by;

The torches grew pale in the halls of their mirth,
And turret and battlement crumbled to earth.
O, where is the name like thine, mighty in story!
The Lord with thy triumphs has blended his glory;
Then lift the dark eye to the azure that's o'er thee,
And rush for the chaplets that brighten before thee.

—*Mary E. Brooks.*

Note on the destruction of the Canaanites.—It is better that the wicked should be destroyed a

hundred times over than that they should tempt those who are yet innocent to join their company. Let us but think what might have been our fate, and the fate of every other nation under heaven at this hour, had the sword of the Israelites done its work more sparingly. Even as it was, the small portion of the Canaanites, who were left, and the nations around them, so tempted the Israelites by their idolatrous practices, that we read continually of the whole people of God turning away from his service. But had the heathen lived in the land in equal numbers, and still more had they intermarried largely with the Israelites, how was it possible, humanly speaking, that any sparks of God's truth should have survived to the coming of Christ? Would not the Israelites have lost all their peculiar character? And if they had retained the name of Jehovah as of their God, would they not have formed as unworthy notions of his attributes, and worshiped him with a worship as abominable as that which the Moabites paid to Chemosh, or the Philistines to Dagon? But this was not to be, and, therefore, the nations of Canaan were to be cut off utterly. The Israelites' sword, in its bloodiest executions, wrought a work of mercy for all the countries of the earth to the very end of the world. They seem of very small importance to us now, those perpetual contests with the Canaanites, and the Midianites, and the Ammonites, and the Philistines, with which the Books of Joshua and Judges and Samuel are almost filled. We may half wonder that God should have interfered in such quarrels, or have changed the course of nature in order to give one of the nations of Palestine victory over another. But in these contests on the fate of one of these nations of Palestine, the happiness of the human race depended. The Israelites fought, not for themselves only, but for us. It might follow that they should thus be accounted the enemies of all mankind, it might be that they were tempted by their very distinctness to despise other nations; still they did God's work, still they preserved unhurt the seed of eternal life, and were

the ministers of blessing to other nations, even though they themselves failed to enjoy it.—*T. Arnold.*

Authorities to be Consulted.

Thornley Smith's Joshua and his Times, p. 62. Stanley's History of the Jewish Church, Lecture X. Smith's Old Testament History, p. 250. Milman's History of the Jews, i, 218. Bible Educator, ii, 149. Bishop Hall's Contemplations. Edmondson's Short Sermons, 290. Freeman's Bible Manners and Customs, Nos. 365, 447. See a poem by John and Charles Wesley, describing the capture of Jericho. Foster's Cyclopedia of Illustrations [Figures marked with a star refer to poetical quotations]—vers. 13-17: 7174; ver. 15: *1634, *3652, 6207; vers. 1-5: *3578, 3576, 4061.

Practical Root Thoughts.

[THE TRIUMPHS OF FAITH.]

1. Faith brings pilgrims out of the wilderness into the rest of the promised land. Ver. 10.
2. Faith delights in the memory of God's mercies in the past. Ver. 10.
3. Faith fulfills the ordinances of God's house even while dangers and enemies are around. Ver. 10.
4. Faith appropriates the bounty of God, and finds abundant provision. Ver. 11.
5. Faith sees old supports fail without fear, as new sustenance is afforded. Ver. 12.
6. Faith gives courage in facing unknown dangers. Ver. 13.
7. Faith finds threatened dangers turn into tokens of God's presence and help. Vers. 14, 15.
8. Faith finds no foes too mighty and no obstacles too great in its path of conquest. Vers. 2-5.

B. C. 1451.]

LESSON IV.

[July 22.

ISRAEL DEFEATED AT AI.—Josh. 7. 10-26.

GOLDEN TEXT.—Be sure your sin will find you out.—NUM. 32. 23.

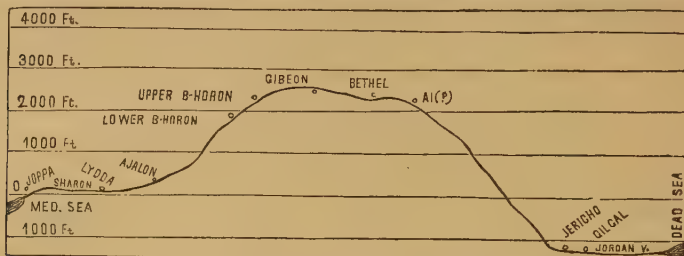
TIME.—B. C. 1451.

PLACE.—The camp of Israel, at Gilgal.

CONNECTING LINKS.—(1) The capture and destruction of Jericho. Josh. 6. 6-27. (2) The defeat at Ai. Josh. 7. 1-9.

INTRODUCTION.—At Jericho the Lord had made known to the Canaanites his great and holy name; but before Ai the Israelites were to learn that he would also sanctify himself on them if they transgressed his covenant, and that the congregation of the Lord could only conquer the power of the world so long as it was faithful to his covenant. But notwithstanding the command which Joshua had enforced upon the people, (chap. 6. 18.) Achan, a member of the tribe of Judah, laid hands upon the property in Jericho which had been consecrated by the ban, and thus brought the ban upon the children of Israel, the whole nation. His breach of trust is described as unfaithfulness (a trespass) on the part of

the children of Israel in the ban, in consequence of which the anger of the Lord was kindled against the whole nation.—*Keil*. The location of *Ai*.—Captain Wilson and Lieutenant Anderson spent several days in examining every hill-top and almost every acre of ground for several miles east, north, and south



Profile Section of Central Palestine from East to West.

of Bethel, and the result was the identification, beyond any reasonable doubt, of *Ai* with *Et-Tel* , an eminence a little south-east of Bethel, covered with heaps of stones and ruins. In chap. 8. 28, where it is said, "Joshua made it a heap forever," the Hebrew word for *heap* is *Tel* , which strikingly confirms this identification.—*D. Steele*.

10 And the LORD said unto Josh'u-a, Get thee up; wherefore ^a liest thou thus upon thy face?

11 Is'ra-el hath sinned, and they have also transgressed my covenant which I commanded them: for ¹ they have even

taken of the accursed thing, and have also stolen, and ² dissembled also, and they have put *it* even among their own stuff.

12 Therefore ³ the children of Is'ra-el could not stand before their enemies,

^a Fallest.—¹ Chap. 6. 17.—² Acts 5. 1.

³ Num. 14. 45; Judg. 2. 14.

10. The Lord said unto Joshua—God's answer is given directly, and apparently suddenly, to Joshua, in terms of biting reproof. Joshua must no longer lie helpless before God; the cause of the calamity was to be found elsewhere.—*Speaker's Commentary*. Get thee up—The spirit of God's reply is, "This is no time for prayer, but for purifying the camp. Look for the cause of your defeat, not in my sovereignty, but in your sin."—*D. Steele*.

11. Israel hath sinned—The sinner is not named, though the sin is described; but it is spoken of as the act of Israel in general till they have fastened it upon the particular person, and their *godly sorrow* have so wrought a *clearing of themselves*, as theirs did. 2 Cor. 7. 11.—*M. Henry*. However truly the whole Scriptures speak of each man as individually an object of divine mercy and justice, they teach just as truly that a nation is one organic whole, in which the individuals are merely members of the same body, and are not atoms isolated from one another and the whole, since the state as a divine institution is founded upon family relationship.—*Keil and Delitzsch*. Have also transgressed—The first three clauses describe the sin in its relation to God as a grievous offense; the three following accord—

ing to its true character, as a great, obstinate, and reckless crime.—*Keil*. Of the accursed thing—Rather, "that which had been devoted or dedicated." The silver and gold, etc., were to come as consecrated things into the treasury of the sanctuary, (6. 19); the rest of the spoil was to be burned with fire, as a sacrifice of the first-fruits of Israel's conquests. Achan, then, in diverting any of these devoted things to his own purposes, committed the sin of sacrilege, that of Ananias and Sapphira.—*Speaker's Commentary*. Put it among their own stuff—The anger of God and the heinousness of Israel's sin are marked by the accumulation of clause upon clause, emphasis being given to each new item in the indictment by the repetition of "also." As a climax they had even put the consecrated property purloined from God "among their own stuff," that is, appropriated it to their own use.—*Speaker's Commentary*.

12. Therefore the children of Israel could not stand—In the moral government of God there is a causal connection between moral and natural evil, between sin and suffering. But how few the national leaders who have eyes to see the relation which a nation's righteous character sustains to its victory in war

but turned *their* backs before their enemies, because they were ⁴accursed: neither will I be with you any more, except ye destroy the accursed from among you.

13 Up, ⁵sanctify the people, and say, Sanctify ⁶yourselves against to-morrow: for thus saith the LORD God of Is'-ra-el, *There is an accursed thing in the midst of thee, O Is'-ra-el: thou canst not stand before thine enemies, until ye take away the accursed thing from among you.*

14 In the morning therefore ye shall be brought according to your tribes:

⁴ Deut. 7. 26; chap. 6. 18. — ⁵ Exod. 19. 10. — ⁶ Chap. 3. 5. — ⁷ Prov. 16. 33; Jonah 1. 7.

and its prosperity and greatness in peace!—*D. Steele.* Because they were accursed.—In taking of that which was under the ban as devoted to God, they had placed themselves under the ban, and devoted themselves to destruction. Neither will I be with you.—They had ceased at that moment to be God's people, and were left to themselves. Except ye destroy the accursed.—The only way in which they could separate themselves from the fate of the devoted or banned was to destroy it, and thus clear themselves.

13. Sanctify yourselves [See note, Lesson II, verse 5].—In order to prepare for the scrutiny which the Lord was to exercise upon all the camp, the entire people were to perform the ablutions and observances required by the Law. Jehovah required these washings whenever he came near to them in order to impress them with his own holiness.—*D. Steele.* An accursed thing in the midst of thee—God could at this time have told him who the person was that had done this thing, but does not, (1) To exercise the zeal of Joshua and Israel in searching out the criminal; (2) To give the sinner himself space to repent and make confession.—*M. Henry.*

14. Brought according to your tribes.—As the tribes were divided into families, so these again were subdivided into houses, commonly called "fathers' houses," and the fathers' houses again into men, that is, fathers of families. Each of these was represented by its natural head, so that we must picture the affair as conducted in the following manner: in order to discover the tribe, the twelve tribe princes came before the Lord; and in order to discover the family, the heads of families of the tribe that had been taken; and so on to the end,

and it shall be, *that* the tribe which ⁷the LORD taketh shall come according to the families *thereof*; and the family which the LORD shall take shall come by households; and the household which the LORD shall take shall come man by man.

15 And ⁸it shall be, *that* he that is taken with the accursed thing shall be burnt with fire, he and all that he hath: because he hath transgressed the covenant of the LORD, and because he ⁹hath wrought ¹⁰folly in Is'-ra-el.

16 So Josh'u-a rose up early in the morning, and brought Is'-ra-el by their

¹¹ 1 Samuel 14, 38, 39. — ¹² Genesis 34. 7; Judges 20. 6. — ¹³ Or, wickedness.

each one in turn being subjected to the lot.—*Keil.* The tribe which the Lord taketh.—The original for "take" has the import of *arresting, seizing*, being the appropriate term for the apprehension of criminals.—*G. Bush.* The word *taketh*, as we may see from 1 Sam. 14. 42, is the technical term used for decision by lot. See also Prov. 16. 33. Decision by lot is mentioned frequently in the Old Testament, and once in the New. Acts 1. 24-26. It recommends itself as a sort of appeal to the Almighty, free from all influence of passion or bias.—*D. Steele.* The Hebrew word for lot, (*goral*, derived from a verb *goor*, or *garar*, "to roll,") suggests that small stones, probably white and black ones, were used. These were probably drawn from a chest; hence the expression used of the lot, that it "came up," (18. 11,) and "came out," (19. 1).—*Speaker's Commentary.*

15. Burnt with fire.—That is, after he had been put to death by stoning, (cf. ver. 25.) The burning of the body after capital punishment was prescribed in extreme cases as an aggravation of the penalty. Cf. Lev. 20. 14.—*Speaker's Commentary.* All that he hath—See below on verse 24. Wrought folly.—An expression used here, as in Gen. 34. 7, to denote such a crime as was irreconcilable with the honor of Israel as the people of God.—*Keil.* "Folly" is a very appropriate name for sin, since every sin proceeds from real intellectual stupidity, short-sightedness, and fatuity, which the Greeks expressed by a word signifying *missing the mark*.—*D. Steele.*

16. Joshua rose up.—To Achan himself that must have been a night of utter wretchedness; and it is surprising that he did not at once go and throw himself at the feet of Joshua, and make confession of his crime. Had he

tribes; and the tribe of Ju'dah was taken:

17 And he brought the family of Ju'dah; and he took the family of the Zar'hites; and he brought the family of the Zar'hites man by man; and Zab'di was taken.

18 And he brought his household man

¹⁰ Gen. 4. 7; Num. 32, 23; Acts 5. 1-10.—¹¹ 1 Sam. 6. 5; Jer. 13. 16; John 9. 24.

done so, who can tell but that there might have been some mitigation of his punishment? But he was probably still deceived by the hope that he might perchance escape detection; and thus blinded by the god of this world, he ventured to await the approaching ordeal.—*T. Smith.* **Early in the morning**—In all hot countries during the heated months early morning is the time for business.—*D. Steele.* **Brought Israel by their tribes**—See note on verse 14. **The tribe of Judah was taken**—It was indicated by lot that the sinner belonged to that tribe.

17. **The family of Judah**—That is, the clans represented by the sons of Judah as their heads, constituting together one family. **Zar'hites**—The descendants of Zerah, or Zarah, twin brothers of Pharez, whose birth is related Gen. 38. 30. **Man by man**—The expression "man by man" is used simply because it was the representative men who came for the lot to be cast, not only in the case of the fathers' houses, but in that of the families also.—*Keil.* **Zabdi was taken**—"Zabdi" is generally identified with the "Zimri" of 1 Chron. 2. 6. If the genealogy here given were complete, Achan would thus be only the fifth in descent from Judah. But there is little doubt that in this case, as in others, several generations are omitted, most likely those which intervened between Zerah and Zabdi, and which covered the space between the migration of Jacob's household to Egypt and the exodus.—*Speaker's Commentary.*

18. **He brought his household**—Thus gradually was the circle reduced within which the culprit lay, as it were, concealed, until at length this breach of the command was brought home to a certain family. The scene must have been a deeply impressive one. At first anxiety would be depicted on every countenance, and as the process went on, while some would be relieved in part, others would become more anxious still. At length the moment comes when the individual himself would be marked out as the transgressor.—*T. Smith.* **Achan . . . was**

by man; and ¹⁰ A'chan, the son of Car'mi, the son of Zab'di, the son of Ze'rah, of the tribe of Ju'dah, was taken.

19 And Josh'u-a said unto A'chan, My son, give, ¹¹ I pray thee, glory to the LORD God of Is'ra-el, ¹² and make confession unto him; and tell me now what thou hast done: hide it not from me.

¹² Numbers 5. 6, 7; 2 Chronicles 30. 22; Psalm 51. 3; Daniel 9. 4.

taken—God might have instantaneously revealed the sinner, but he chose to sift the nation thus gradually in order that the moral sense of every man might be awakened, and that the conscience of Achan, when he saw the network of conviction and punishment closing in upon him, might prompt him to confession. But he remained impenitent till he found himself within the grasp of the Divine arrest.—*D. Steele.*

It is also intimated with what a certain and unerring judgment the righteous God does and will distinguish between the innocent and the guilty, so that though for a time they seem involved in the same condemnation, as the whole tribe did when it was first taken by the lot, yet he who has his fan in his hand will effectually provide for the *taking out of the precious from the vile*, so that though the righteous be of the same tribe and family and household with the wicked, yet they shall never be treated as *the wicked*.—*M. Henry.*

19. **Joshua said . . . My son**—How gentle are these words! There is no harshness, no severity, but a true paternal pity for the man who has placed himself in so fearful and perilous a position.—*T. Smith.* Though he was obliged to *act* as a magistrate, yet he was willing Achan should know that he *felt* as a father.—*G. Bush.* **Give . . . glory to the Lord**—The phrase assumes that the glory of God is always promoted by manifestations of the truth.—*Speaker's Commentary.* **Make confession unto him**—Achan should confess his sin in order to receive inward forgiveness, although he has outwardly fallen under the irrevocable sentence of God.—*F. R. Fay.* By confession he would not only ascribe to God the glory of his omniscience from which no secrets are hid, but also of his justice in punishing the crime. **Tell me now**—Joshua requires this confession to be made to him, because he stood, both to Achan and to the people, in God's stead. It was in effect the same, therefore, as making it to God himself.—*Bush.*

By this example judges are taught that, while they punish crimes, they ought so to temper their severity as not to lay aside the feelings of human-

20 And A'chan answered Josh'u-a, and said, Indeed I have sinned against the LORD God of Is'ra-el, and thus and thus have I done:

21 When I saw among the spoils a goodly Bab-y-lo'nish garment, and two

c Tongue.—¹² Prov. 15, 27;

ity, and, on the other hand, that they ought to be merciful without being reckless and remiss; that, in short, they ought to be as parents to those they condemn without substituting undue mildness for the sternness of justice.—*Calvin*.

20. I have sinned—The Hebrew original makes the *I* emphatic. "I, and I only, have sinned."—*D. Steele*. It is to be feared that it was somewhat as Judas did when he had betrayed his Master—from terror, rather than from true repentance. There is, in fact, no virtue in a man's confessing his sins when they can no longer be hid.—*T. Smith*.

21. I saw among the spoils—The three words occurring in this narrative, "I saw, I coveted, I took," strikingly express the rise, progress, and consummation of crime.—*G. Bush*. The frankness and apparent penitence of this confession affects our hearts with sorrow for the sad fate of Achan. It lacked but two elements—spontaneity and seasonableness—which will be lacking in the confession of every impenitent

hundred shekels of silver, and a wedge of gold of fifty shekels weight, then I¹² coveted them, and took them; and, behold, they are hid in the earth in the midst of my tent, and the silver under it.

Eph. 5, 5; 1 Tim 6, 10.

passed near Jericho on their journeys between Egypt and the East.—*M. S. Terry*. Herodotus, (i, 195,) says, "The dress of the Babylonians is a linen tunic reaching to the feet, and above it another tunic made in wool, besides which they have a short white cloak thrown around them." The Babylonian cylinders furnish us with representations of a flounced robe, reaching from the neck to the feet.—*D. Steele*. The cut represents one from a very ancient inscription found on a cylinder in Babylon. **Two hundred shekels of silver**—In different periods the shekel varied in value. The shekel of the sanctuary differed from the shekel of the king. Its usual value was about sixty-two and one half cents. The whole value of the silver was about \$125, when a dollar had nearly ten times the purchasing power that it now has.—*D. Steele*. The silver found by Achan was probably reckoned by weight, not as coined money.



Babylonian Apparel.
[From the monuments.]



Ancient Shekel.

sinner before the judgment-seat of Christ.—*D. Steele*. **A goodly Babylonish garment**—Literally, a mantle of Shinar, one of excellence. The mention of this garment indicates that Jericho had enriched itself by commerce with Babylon, in the land of Shinar. This was rendered easy by the caravans of merchant-men, such as that to which Joseph was sold, (Gen. 37. 25-28,) which frequently must have

The cut represents the Jewish shekel of later date. **Wedge of gold**—Literally, (as margin,) a "tongue" of gold; that is, some implement or ornament of gold shaped like a wedge or tongue.—*Speaker's Commentary*. The weight is given at fifty shekels, equal in value to about thirty dollars.—*F. R. Fay*. **I coveted . . . took them**—The whole philosophy of temptation and sin is here strikingly illustrated. In the sacking of Jericho, Achan, unobserved by any witness, finds, possibly in the king's palace, a beautiful robe and a quantity of gold and silver. The splendor of the garment and the glitter of the precious metals struck his eye and awakened desire. Instead of turning away his eyes, he continued to look and to desire, till desire ripened into volition, and this into action.—*D. Steele*. **The silver under it**—Achan had hidden these things in the ground in the midst

22 So Josh'u-a sent messengers, and they ran unto the tent; and behold, *it was hid* in his tent, and the silver under it.

23 And they took them out of the midst of the tent, and brought them unto Josh'u-a, and unto all the children of Is'ra-el, and ^alaid them out before the LORD.

d Poured.

of his tent, and the silver "under it," that is, under these things (the suffix is neuter, and must be understood as referring to all things with the exception of the silver.) The Babylonish cloak and the tongue of gold were probably placed in a chest; at any rate they would be carefully packed up, and the silver was placed underneath.—*Keil*.

The *tongues* of heathen eloquence—the jewels of poetry, philosophy, and rhetoric, of this world's Jericho, are not to be used for self-display and personal adornment, but are to be sanctified and dedicated to God.—*C. Wordsworth*.

22, 23. Sent messengers . . . they ran—The interests of the entire nation, involved in this affair, require prompt and energetic measures. The theft itself, its disastrous consequences at Ai, and the supernatural detection of the criminal, had awakened an intense excitement, which caused the haste of the messengers.—*D. Steele*. Laid them out before the Lord—He had them laid down before Jehovah, that is, before the tabernacle, where the whole affair had taken place.—*Keil*. They were before the Lord's eyes when covered up in the earth; but now they are publicly displayed before the ark of the covenant, the symbol of Jehovah's presence.—*D. Steele*.

24. Joshua, and all Israel—The objection of Colenso, that "all Israel" was a body too numerous to perform many acts recorded of them, is sufficiently met by the remark that the heads of the tribes and clans are constructively "all Israel."—*D. Steele*. His sons, and his daughters—Why Achan's family and property should all be destroyed for his sin, is a question to be answered by reference to that archaic jurisprudence which dealt with families rather than with individuals. In the patriarchal system of government the father was absolute lord and representative of the entire household. His children and possessions were identified with him in praise or in punishment. And this judicial idea of Patriarchism was also carried over into Mosaism. The family was sometimes punished rather than the individual, the latter being ut-

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24 And Josh'u-a, and all Is'ra-el with him, took A'chan the son of Ze'rah, and the silver, and the garment, and the wedge of gold, and his sons, and his daughters, and his oxen, and his asses, and his sheep, and his tent, and all that he had: and they brought them unto the ¹⁴valley of A'chor.

¹⁴ Chap. 15. 7.

terly absorbed in the former, and such family punishment sometimes continued through many generations.—*M. S. Terry*. Thus the household which had dishonored God and well-nigh ruined Israel was made extinct forever.—*J. L. H*. Achan had fallen under the ban by laying hands upon what had been banned, and consequently was exposed to the same punishment as a town that had fallen away to idolatry. Deut. 13. 16, 17. The law of the ban was founded upon the assumption that the conduct to be punished was not a crime of which the individual only was guilty, but one in which the whole family of the leading sinner, in fact every one connected with him, participated.—*Keil*. As a question of fact, it is difficult to conceive that Achan's family would have been ignorant of his guilt.—*Grosier*. His oxen, and his asses, and his sheep—Which, though not capable of sin nor of punishment properly so called, yet as they were made for man's use, so they are rightly destroyed for man's good; and, being daily killed for our bodily food, it cannot seem strange to kill them for the instruction of our minds, that hereby we might learn the detestable and contagious nature of sin, which involves innocent creatures in its plagues.—*M. Pool*. Achan's sin was a sin of covetousness, a sin of robbing God. All property, cattle, goods, houses, is from God, and God gives and takes it away as he deems best. God's punishments are adjusted to men's sins. By the destruction of the property of Achan, God would show that sins of covetousness and sacrilege never can enrich those that commit them. Rather, such sins are like the moths which fret the garment of their estate.—*C. Wordsworth*. The valley of Achor—Which received its name on that occasion. Even to Achan himself "the valley of Achor" may have been made "a door of hope," (Hos. 2. 15,) because he confessed his sin, and there is reason to hope and believe that he listened to the words of Joshua, "My son, give glory to the Lord God of Israel," and submitted to the punishment due to his sin; and so, with reverence be it said, his case may

25 And Josh'u-a said ¹⁵ Why hast thou troubled us? the LORD shall trouble thee this day. ¹⁶ And all Is'rael stoned him with stones, and burned them with fire, after they had stoned them with stones.

¹⁵ Chap. 6, 18; 1 Chron. 2, 7; Gal. 5, 19.—¹⁶ Deut. 17, 5.—
¹⁷ Chap. 8, 29; 2 Sam. 13, 17; Lam. 3, 63.

perhaps be compared with that of the penitent thief, who said: "We receive the due reward of our deeds," Luke 23. 41.—*C. Wordsworth.*

The eagle that stole a coal from the altar, thereby set her nest on fire, which consumed both her young eagles and herself that stole it.—*Archbishop Whitgift.*

Oliver Cromwell, in the storming of Drogheda, ordered an almost promiscuous massacre of the Irish inhabitants. Of the act itself I do not speak. It is now generally admitted that the Puritans attached an undue authority to the details of the Jewish Scriptures. But the point to be observed is, that Cromwell's act has received a high eulogy in our own time from one (Thomas Carlyle) who, as well by his genius and learning as by his command of the sympathies of the rising generation, in a great measure represents the most advanced intelligence of our age: "Oliver's proceedings here have been the theme of much loud criticism and sibylline execration, into which it is not our plan to enter at present. Terrible surgery, this, but is it surgery and judgment, or atrocious murder merely? This is a question which should be asked and answered. Oliver Cromwell did believe in God's judgments, and did not believe in the rosewater plan of surgery, which, in fact, is this editor's case too!"—*Stanley.*

25. Why hast thou troubled us—The verb here used has in the Hebrew (*achar*) a sound much like Achan's name.—*D. Steele.* All Israel—Here note the propriety of requiring the whole nation, by their various representatives, to participate in the execution of the law. The great principle embodied is this: The execution of civil law rests largely upon public opinion. When this becomes so corrupt that it will not uphold the law, it becomes a dead letter on the statute-book.—*D. Steele.* Stoned him—Two different words are here rendered "stoned." The former seems to mean in this place to *pelt with stones*, the latter, to *cover with stones*. So we may more accurately render, *All Israel pelted him with stones, and burned them with fire, and covered them with stones.* Perhaps here is an intimation, too, that they stoned Achan with a fiercer violence than they did his family and possessions.—*M. S. Terry.* It was by no means a cruel mode of dealing with a culprit, for death would ensue immediately that

26 And they ¹⁷ raised over him a great heap of stones unto this day. So ¹⁸ the LORD turned from the fierceness of his anger. Wherefore the name of that place was called ¹⁹ The valley of 'A'chor unto this day.

¹⁸ Deut. 13, 17; 2 Sam. 21, 14.—¹⁹ Isa. 65, 10; Hosea 2, 15.—
e That is, Trouble.

a heavy stone fell upon the head or upon the chest, nor was it ever accompanied with torture or mutilation.—*T. Smith.* Even the gold and the silver were consumed, for, as Calvin observes, God would not allow the sanctuary to be polluted by the proceeds of theft; and, therefore, although such things found in Jericho were to be consecrated to the Lord, and to be brought into his treasury, these he could not accept. Stolen property can never be offered to God with his approval, even for the benefit of the poor or for the service of the Church.—*T. Smith.*

26. A great heap of stones—Michaelis says it is still a prevalent custom in the East to throw stones, as a mark of reproach and disgrace, upon the graves of criminals.—*D. Steele.* Unto this day—We need not doubt that this Achan was an historical character. The people, it is said, stoned the detected criminal, and threw a great heap of stones, in token of everlasting detestation, on the spot where he suffered, and no doubt this spot was still shown in later times.—*H. Ewald.* Turned from the fierceness of his anger—God's anger is not an ebullition of blind passion, but a holy displeasure against the unrighteousness of men. When this unrighteousness is removed, God's anger ceases.—*F. R. Fay.* The valley of Achor—This name signifies *trouble, disturbance*, and is derived from the verb which Joshua uses twice in verse 25. Hence the propriety of the name.—*D. Steele.* It is supposed to have been what is now known as the Wady Kelt.

Gold! Gold! in all ages the curse of mankind,
Thy fetters are forged for the soul and the mind;
The limbs may be free as the wings of a bird,
And the mind be the slave of a look or a word.
To gain thee men barter eternity's crown,
Yield honor, affection, and lasting renown.

—*Park Benjamin.*

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Practical Root Thoughts.

[SIN FINDING OUT THE SINNER.]

1. Sin finds men out in God's knowledge and notice of it. Vers. 10, 11.

2. Sin finds men out in its influence to weaken and to cause failure. Vers. 11, 12.

3. Sin finds men out in injury to others, causing the innocent to suffer with the guilty. Vers. 12, 13.

4. Sin finds men out in separation from God, and the withdrawal of his presence. Ver. 12.

5. Sin finds men out in its discovery and detection before the eyes of all. Vers. 14-18.

6. Sin finds men out in its penalties of suffering and death. Ver. 25.

7. Sin finds men out in its tainted memories. Ver. 26.

B. C. 1451.]

LESSON V.

[July 29.]

THE READING OF THE LAW.—JOSH. 8. 30-35.

GOLDEN TEXT.—I have set before you life and death, blessing and cursing.—DEUT. 30. 19.

TIME.—B. C. 1451.

PLACE.—The mountains Ebal and Gerizim, in the center of Palestine.

CONNECTING LINKS.—(1) The capture and destruction of Ai. Josh. 8. 1-29.

INTRODUCTION.—Ai having been destroyed, and the inhabitants of the land sufficiently awed to deter them from attempting to attack the Israelites, the way was now opened for the assembling of the tribes



on a spot which Moses had mentioned before his death, commanding the people there to set up great stones, and to build an altar unto the Lord their God. To the commands of the illustrious lawgiver Joshua paid due regard, as soon as it was practicable, after they had crossed the Jordan; and into the valley between Ebal and Gerizim he now led the mighty host. Other victories may have been obtained over the inhabitants of the intervening territory, though they are not recorded; or it may have been, as we have intimated above, that the people were so terrified by the destruction of Ai as to retire before the advancing host, and leave to Joshua an open path, by which he could proceed to the locality he wished to reach.—T. Smith. The distance from Ai to Shechem, between Gerizim and Ebal, is about thirty miles in a straight line. Ebal is on the north and Gerizim on the south of the vale of Shechem.

30 Then Josh'u-a¹ built an altar unto the LORD God of Is'ra-el² in mount E'bal.

¹ Gen. 8. 90; 12. 7, 8; Exod. 20. 24.

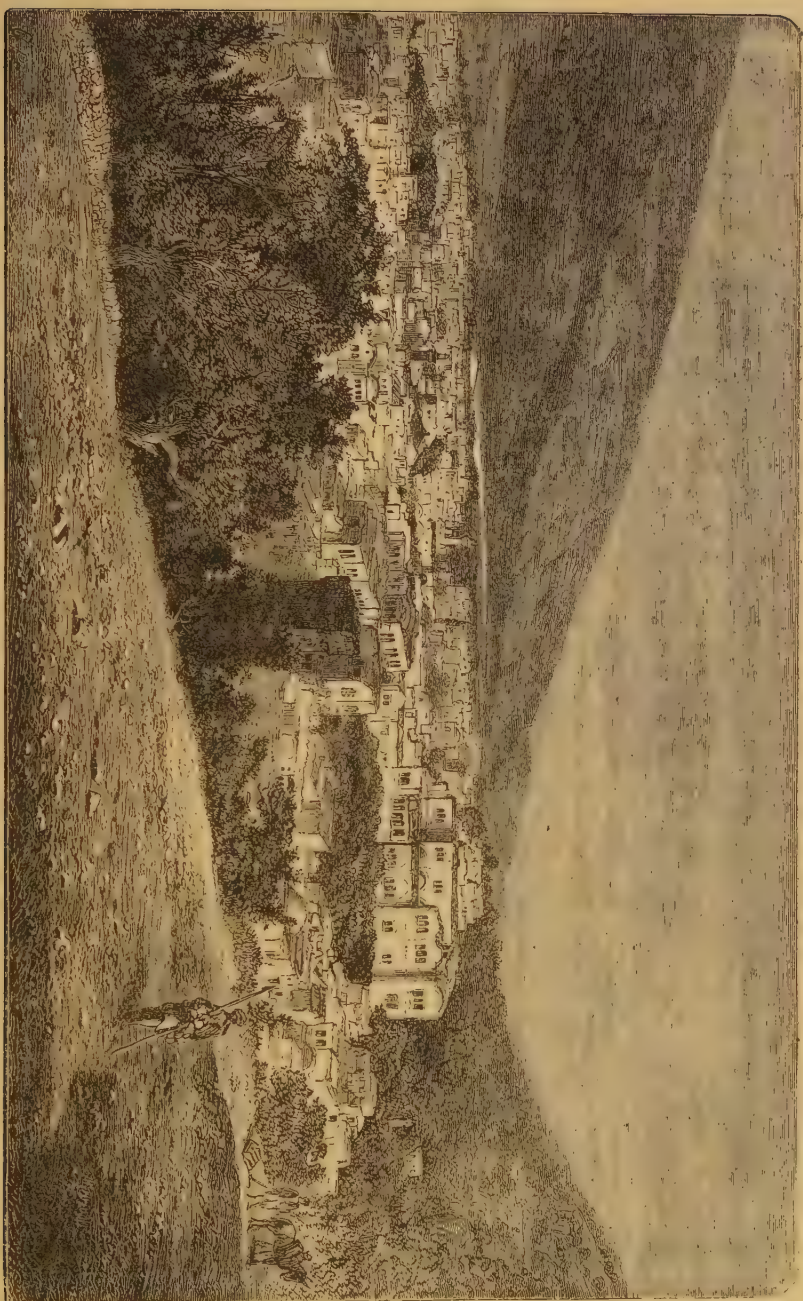
31 As Mo'ses the servant of the LORD commanded the children of Is'ra-el, as

² Deut. 27. 4, 5.

30. Then Joshua—While engaged in the mid career of conquest, the business of the war is suddenly suspended, and instead of pushing their victories on every side, after mastering the frontier towns, they commence a peaceful march into the heart of the country to attend upon a religious solemnity! But God had ordered it, and they cheerfully obeyed. Whatsoever else stands still, the service of God must go forward.—G. Bush. Built an altar—The altar was the symbol of the heart, from which prayer arises, the soul in its prayer presenting Christ as a sacrifice.—F. Johnson. Unto the Lord God of Israel—Jehovah is called "the God of Israel" to show that henceforth no other

god was to be worshiped in Canaan than the God of Israel.—Ket. In Mount Ebal—The spot selected for the setting up of the stones with the law written upon it, as well as for the altar and the offering of sacrifice, was Ebal, the mountain upon which the curses were to be proclaimed; not Gerizim, which was appointed for the publication of the blessings; to show how the law and economy of the Old Testament would denounce the curse which rests upon the whole human race because of sin, to awaken a desire for the Messiah, who was to take away the curse and bring the true blessing instead.—Berchberger Bible.

31. As Moses . . . commanded—In Deut.



Shechem and Mount Gerizim.

it is written in the ^abook of the law of Mo'ses, an altar of whole stones, over which no man hath lift up *any* iron: and ⁴they offered thereon burnt-offerings unto the LORD, and sacrificed peace-offerings.

^a Exod. 20. 25; Deut. 27. 5, 6.

27. This was the coronation of Jehovah as King of the country, and the publication of his law as supreme over it. When a prince enters a country to wrest the throne from wrongful possessors, he is usually crowned at once, to inspire his followers with enthusiasm, and to express his faith in the ultimate accomplishment of his designs. He then fights, not as a candidate for the throne, but as an actual king, who has assumed the crown.—*F. Johnson.* **An altar of whole stones**—According to the law of Exod. 20. 25, a stone altar must not be built of hewn stones, for the touch of an iron tool upon it was regarded as a pollution, and an unhewn stone would the better symbolize that Living Stone, (1 Pet. 2. 4,) cut out of the mountain without hands, (Dan. 2. 45,) which has become the head of the corner, (Eph. 2. 20,) and certainly owes none of its excellence to human culture or polish.—*D. Steele.* **Offered thereon burnt-offerings**—The burnt offering was distinguished from other kinds by the fact that it was entirely consumed by the fire. It was not considered as primarily a sacrifice for sin, though this idea was not wholly excluded, but an offering, a gift.—*F. Johnson.* **Sacrificed peace offerings**—The sacrifice of the peace-offering was accompanied by the imposition of the worshiper's hands upon the head of the animal, and the sprinkling of the blood round about the altar, showing that it had relation to sin. The fat, the richest portion of the animal, was burned; a part of the flesh was given to the priest; and the remainder was eaten by the offerer, together with any whom he might invite to share it with him. The worshiper thus enjoyed, as it were, a feast with Jehovah, and with his most intimate servants, the priests, having the right to share the hospitality of God with those whom he loved.—*F. Johnson.* The burnt offerings were symbolical of the solemn dedication of the people to the Lord; and the peace-offerings, with which thank-offerings were associated, and a sacrificial feast, indicated the joy of the congregation on this renewal of the covenant, all the blessings of which they would now again have a right to claim.—*T. Smith.*

How false, in this light, is the character of the altars, so called, elaborately wrought of the most

32 And ^ahe wrote there upon the stones a copy of the law of Mo'ses, which he wrote in the presence of the children of Is'ra-el.

^a Exod. 20. 24.—^b Deut. 27. 2, 8.

costly marble, erected in the cathedrals of the Church of Rome. But, in fact, they are not altars, nor should the Lord's table be ever so designated, for Christianity has but one altar—the cross of Christ—on which he offered up himself *once for all*.—*T. Smith.*

32. **He wrote there**—The writing was to be in very plain letters, (Deut. 27. 8,) that all the people might read it before pronouncing a curse upon those who should break it, lest they should perform the solemnity as a mere ceremony, careless of its terrible import; and, also, lest through ignorance they should violate the law, and so bring upon themselves the curses which they uttered.—*F. Johnson.* **Upon the stones**—Were these stones the stones of the altar, as Josephus and others represent? This is by no means likely, for the stones of the altar would be comparatively small; and, moreover, they were left in their natural state, and not covered over with plaster. These stones were no doubt additional to the stones of the altar, and were probably set up on the sides of it.—*T. Smith.* Observe, the historian says here “the stones,” not any stones which he himself had mentioned, but the stones of which Moses had spoken in the Pentateuch, with which the sacred writer here supposes the reader to be familiar.—*C. Wordsworth.* **A copy of the law**—In the absence of any specific statement it is impossible to decide the question positively, but we incline to the view of Hengstenberg, Keil, and others, that the so-called “second law” is meant, which is embodied in Deuteronomy, between chap. 4. 44 and chap. 26. 19, omitting, of course, the exhortations and historical incidents with which it is now associated in the Book of Deuteronomy. This would be the essence of all the law of Moses.—*M. S. Terry.* The writing of the law upon stones, which were erected on a mountain in the midst of the land, with the solemn proclamation of blessings and curses, was a practical acknowledgment of the law of the Lord on the part of Israel, a substantial declaration that they would make the law the rule and standard of their life and conduct in the land which the Lord had given them for an inheritance.—*Keil.* Not only on the stones, but rather on the heart should the law of God be written. Jer. 31. 31-34.—*F. R. Fay.*

33. And all Is'ra-el, and their elders, and officers, and their judges, stood on this side the ark and on that side

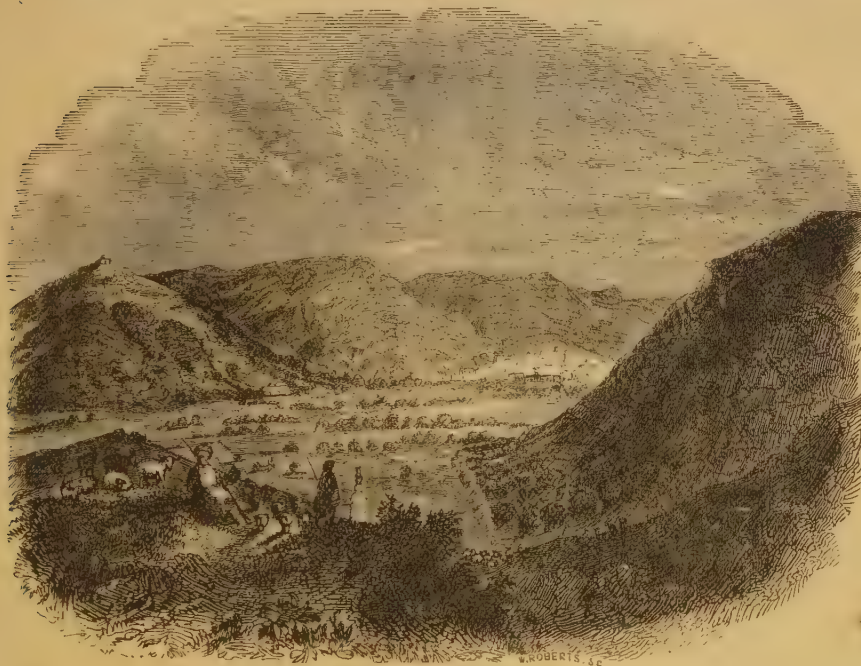
⁶ Deut. 31. 9, 25.

Such writing was common in ancient times. "I have seen numerous specimens of it, certainly more than *two thousand years old*, and still as distinct as when they were first inscribed on the plaster." In this hot climate, where there is no frost to dissolve the cement, it will continue hard and unbroken for thousands of years, which is certainly long enough. The cement on Solomon's Pools remains in admirable preservation, though exposed to all the vicissitudes of the climate, and with no protection. The cement in the tombs about Sidon is still perfect, and the

before the priests the Le'vites, which ⁶bare the ark of the covenant of the LORD, as well ⁷the stranger, as he that

⁷ Deut. 31. 12.

whole people had abandoned the camp at Jericho, at least for the time. The women and children, equally with the men, needed the solemn impressions which the service was adapted to make. Children should be instructed in the law.—*F. Johnson.* **Elders, and officers**—The greatest prince was not excused; the elders, officers, and judges are not above the cognizance of the law, but will come under the blessing or the curse, according as they are or are not obedient to it, and therefore they must be present



The Valley of Shechem.

writing on them entire, though acted upon by the moist, damp air always formed in caverns for perhaps two thousand years. What Joshua did, therefore, when he erected the stones at Mount Ebal, was merely to write *in* the soft cement with a stile, or, more likely, *on* the polished surface when dry, with red paint, as in ancient tombs. If properly sheltered, and not broken away by violence, they would have remained to this day.—*W. Thomson.*

33. And all Israel—This shows that the

to consent to the covenant, and to go before the people therein.—*M. Henry.* **Judges**—The judges mentioned as standing before Joshua in the great assemblies of the people must be understood as the successors of those appointed by Moses, (Exod. 18. 14-24,) and had doubtless been elected with Joshua's sanction from among the same general class of patriarchal seniors.—*H. Hayman.* **Stood on this side . . . and on that**—The breadth of the valley, from the foot

was born among them; half of them over against mount Ger'i-zim, and half of them over against mount E'bal; as Mo'ses

the servant of the LORD had commanded before, that they should bless the people of Is'ra-el.

8 Deut.

11. 29.

of Mount Ebal to that of Mount Gerizim, is not more, in one spot, at least, than five hundred yards wide, extending from south-east to north-west; and here probably, the elders of the people were assembled, while the vast masses oc-

not sustained by the best authorities. The small remnant of the Samaritans performs annually the passover-service on the top of Gerizim, according to the requirements in Exod. 12. **Mount Ebal**—From a root which signifies to



Samaritans on Mount Gerizim.

cupied the adjacent slopes.—*T. Smith.* Before the priests—That is, in view of the priests, the Levites; not that the elders, officers, and judges stood nearer the ark than the priests, but that they so surrounded the ark that the priests who were carrying it had a full view of them.—*G. Bush.* As well the stranger—The descendants, perhaps, of the mixed multitude that came with them out of Egypt, or such as, like Rahab and her family, had already become proselytes from among the inhabitants of Canaan.—*T. Smith.* Mount Gerizim stands about 800 feet above the city of Shechem, (now known as Nablus.) Samaritan tradition claims it as the place where Abraham offered Isaac, but this is

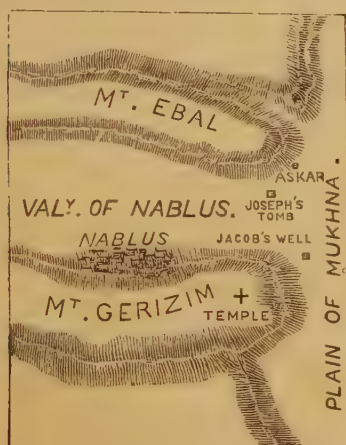
strip off leaves. Mount Ebal is the mountain destitute of leaves, the bald mountain, the barren mountain. Gerizim is equally barren. All the stories in reference to the barrenness of Ebal and the fertility of Gerizim are destitute of truth.—*F. Johnson.* That they should bless—The blessing was to be uttered by the tribes of Simeon, Levi, Judah, Issachar, Joseph, and Benjamin, who sprang from the two wives of Jacob; and the curse by Reuben, with the two sons of Leah's maid Zilpah, and by Zebulun, with Dan and Naphtali, the sons of Rachael's maid Bilhah. It was natural that the utterance of the blessing should be assigned to the tribes which sprang from Jacob's proper wives, since the sons

34 And afterward ⁹he read all the words of the law, ¹⁰the blessings and cursings, according to all that is written in the book of the law.

35 There was not a word of all that

⁹ Deut. 31. 11; Neh. 8. 2.—¹⁰ Deut. 29. 20, 21; 30. 19.

of the wives occupied a higher position than the sons of the maids—just as the blessing had pre-eminence over the curse. But in order to secure the division into two sixes, it was necessary that two of the eight sons of the wives should be



Plan of Shechem and Vicinity.

^aassociated with those who pronounced the curses. The choice fell upon Reuben, because he had forfeited his right of primogeniture by his incest, (Gen. 49. 4,) and upon Zebulon, as the youngest son of Leah.—*Keil*.

A wonderful confirmation of Scripture is afforded us by modern discovery. The Rev. George Williams was the first to notice the important fact that in this valley there is a natural amphitheater, formed by a recess in Mount Ebal, exactly facing a similar recess in Mount Gerizim; this amphitheater, the subsequent investigations of Captains Wilson and Anderson, of the Palestine Exploration Fund, proved to be admirably adapted, both in size and acoustic properties for the assemblage of a large concourse of persons to hear the reading of the law.—*E. H. Palmer*.

34. Afterward he read.—That is, he commanded the priests or Levites to read, as is evident from Deut. 27. 14. In innumerable instances in the Scriptures a person is said to do that which he orders or procures to be done.—*G. Bush*. All the words of the law.—It would seem that Joshua, on the present occa-

Mo'ses commanded, which Josh'u-a read not before all the congregation of Is'ra-el, ¹¹with the women and the little ones, and the strangers ¹²that ^awere conversant among them.

¹¹ Deut. 31. 12.—¹² Exod. 12. 28; Zech. 8. 23.—^a Walked.

sion, must have read, at least, all the legislative portion of the Pentateuch before the people. The terms of this verse cannot be satisfactorily explained as importing only the blessings and curses of Deut. 27 and 28.—*Speaker's Commentary*. The blessings and curses—It is consistent with the divine economy of salvation in the time of the old covenant, that on the entrance of the chosen people into the promised land, not merely blessing but also curse was held up before them. A people standing so low in morality as the Israelites then did needed stern discipline, and not only might be allured by promises, but must be alarmed by threats.—*F. R. Fay*.

The acoustic properties of this valley are interesting. A single voice might be heard by many thousands, shut in and conveyed up and down by the inclosing hills. In the early morning we could not only see from Gerizim a man driving his ass down a path on Mount Ebal, but could hear every word he uttered as he urged it on; and in order to test the matter more certainly, on a subsequent occasion two of our party stationed themselves on opposite sides of the valley, and with perfect ease recited the commandments antiphonally.—*H. B. Tristram*.

35. All that Moses commanded.—It was not many weeks since Moses had preached the whole book of *Deuteronomy*—to them, yet Joshua must now read it all over again; it is good to hear twice what God has spoken once, (Psa. 62. 11,) and to review what has been delivered to us, or to have it repeated, that we may not let it slip.—*M. Henry*. To the important inferences deduced from this interesting narrative this may be added: It affords another proof that Joshua had a copy of the law of Moses, and that he was guided by it in his practice. It is an argument for the genuineness of the Pentateuch generally, and of *Deuteronomy* in particular. Joshua never would have engaged in such an expedition as this, and have done what he is here related to have done, unless he had an express command from God to do what he did. Such a command was given in the law of Moses, and, as far as we know, it was given nowhere else.—*C. Wordsworth*. The little ones—Children would be deeply impressed by the solemnities of the scene.—*Bush*.

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Practical Root Thoughts.

[ISRAEL'S RECOGNITION OF GOD.]

1. God's people must recognize God as the sole ruler and possessor of the land which they receive as his gift. Ver. 20.

2. God's people must recognize God as entering into sacred covenant relations with them, of reconciliation, peace, and fellowship. Ver. 31.

3. God's people must recognize God's law as supreme in its authority. Ver. 32.

4. God's people must recognize a personal and individual obligation to hear and obey God's law. Ver. 33.

5. God's people must recognize the twofold character of God's law, both in its blessings and in its cursings, in warning as well as promise. Ver. 34.

6. God's people must recognize that their children and their households have an equal interest in God's law with themselves. Ver. 35.

B. C. 1444.]

LESSON VI.

[Aug. 5.]

THE CITIES OF REFUGE.—Josh. 20. 1-9.

GOLDEN TEXT.—Who have fled for refuge to lay hold upon the hope set before us.—HEB. 6. 18.

TIME.—B. C. 1444, at the close of the conquest.

PLACE.—Shiloh, the place of the tabernacle.

CONNECTING LINKS.—(1) The treaty with the Gibeonites. Josh. 9. 1-27. (2) The battle of Bethhoron, and conquest of Southern Palestine. Josh. 10. 1-43. (3) The battle of Lake Merom, and conquest of Northern Palestine. Josh. 11. 1-23. (4) The division of the land among the tribes. Josh. 13-19.

INTRODUCTION.—In an unsettled state of society the execution of justice was necessarily left in private hands. The lowest stage of national development is where every one assumes the right of avenging alleged misdeeds at his discretion; and it was, therefore, already an upward step when prevailing custom restricted this right to certain persons, who, although wielding no public authority, were yet invested, *ipso facto*, for the time being, with a public character. It was in such a spirit that the unwritten code of the East conceded to the nearest kinsman of a murdered man the right of avenging the blood that had been shed. He was permitted to kill the murderer without notice, openly or secretly, wheresoever he might find him. Such rude justice necessarily involved grave evils. It gave no opportunity to the person charged with crime of establishing his innocence: it recognized no distinction between murder, manslaughter, and accidental homicide; it perpetuated family blood-feuds, the avenger of blood being liable to be treated in his turn as a murderer by the kinsman of the man whom he had slain. These grievances could not be removed as long as there was no central government strong enough to vindicate the law, but they might be mitigated, and to do this was the object of the institution in the text.—*Speaker's Commentary.*

1 The Lord also spake unto Josh'u-a, saying,

2 Speak to the children of Is'ra-el,

saying, Appoint 'out for you cities of refuge, whereof I spake unto you by the hand of Mo'ses:

¹ Exod. 21. 13; Num.

25. 6, 11, 14; Deut. 19. 2, 9.

1, 2. **Spake unto Joshua.**—Either through the high-priest, by the agency of the breast-plate, or by voice from the Holy of Holies, or by an impression upon the mind which gave its own assurance of a divine message. **Cities of refuge, whereof I spake.**—God had commanded Israel by Moses in the plains of Moab, that when they had crossed the Jordan into

Canaan, they should appoint cities to be cities of refuge; six cities, three on one side of Jordan, and three on the other. See Num. 35. 9-15. The command is now executed by Joshua. Here is another proof of the harmony between the Pentateuch and the Book of Joshua. The one confirms the veracity and genuineness of the other. — *C. Wordsworth.*

3 That the slayer that killeth *any* person unawares *and* unwittingly may flee thither : and they shall be your refuge from the avenger of blood.

4 And when he that doth flee unto one of those cities shall stand at the en-

^a Deut. 21. 19 ; Ruth 4. 1, 2 ; Job 5. 4 ; Jer. 38. 7.

By the hand—A Hebrew idiom, meaning, *by the instrumentality*, the hand being the organ by which men most usually execute their purposes.—*F. Johnson.*

3. The slayer that killeth . . . unawares—The design of the city of refuge was not to screen criminals, but to afford an opportunity to all accused of so grave a charge to show the absence of a guilty intent. In order to do this the guilty must be temporarily received as well as the innocent.—*D. Steele.* Even the altar itself was to afford no asylum to the guilty, for the Mosaic ritual said, "If any man come presumptuously on his neighbor to slay him with guile, thou shalt take him from mine altar." Exod. 21. 14. In no instance did the Jewish law connive at sin.—*T. Smith.* **They shall be your refuge**—Heathen nations had their *asyla*, groves, temples, altars, and even cities, to which offenders might flee for protection. But in process of time they were much abused, and many of the vilest characters were permitted to claim in them exemption from punishment. The city of Ephesus, for example, was resorted to as an asylum by willful murderers, and hence the Emperor Tiberius deemed it necessary to interfere, and to limit both the number and the privileges of such cities.—*T. Smith.* **From the avenger of blood**—In avenging blood the relative of the murdered person acted thus, not from mere blind passion, but as a public officer, appointed to the task ; and to shrink from it was, therefore, recreancy to duty, as for a policeman or sheriff to shrink from the infliction of just punishment is with us a recreancy to duty. Thus the punishment of willful murder was secured, so that perhaps few of the guilty escaped. Mr. Palmer, in his recent explorations of the Sinaitic wilderness, found the Arabs every-where averse to beginning a course of violence for fear of the law of blood revenge.—*F. Johnson.*

In all heathendom human life is deemed of little value, and hence wholesale massacres of their subjects take place by the command of kings and princes, sometimes to gratify their revenge, and often, as in Dahomey and elsewhere, in accordance with ancient customs. How much we owe to Judaism and to Christianity.—*T. Smith.*

tering of the ²gate of the city, and shall declare his cause in the ears of the elders of that city they shall ^atake him into the city unto them, and give him a place, that he may dwell among them.

^a Gather ; Psalm 26. 9.

4. He that doth flee unto one of those cities—The rabbins relate how every possible facility was to be afforded to the refugee. The roads to these cities were to be kept in good repair, no hillock was left, no river nor stream was allowed over which there was not a bridge, the road was to be at least thirty-two cubits, broad, (three rods,) and every kind of obstruction was to be removed that might hurt the foot or hinder the speed of the fugitive. At every turning or branching of roads, posts were erected bearing the words, *Refuge! Refuge!* to guide the fugitive in his flight ; so benign and considerate was the provision made for the benefit of the accidental slayer of his fellow-man.—*Bush.* **Stand at the entering of the gate**—The gate was surmounted by an arch or by beams which upheld the massive wall above. The gateway was thus sheltered from sun and storm. It was a convenient place for the sessions of the judges, and was habitually used by them. Its publicity also tended to prevent abuses of their authority. The gateway of the



City Gate.

city of refuge was probably always attended, night and day, by men whose duty it was to receive and take charge of fugitives.—*F. Johnson.* **They shall take him into the city**—Provided they are satisfied from his relation of the facts that he is innocent. **Give him a place**—It may be asked why, if the proper judges were satisfied of his innocence of the crime of willful murder, he were not at once dismissed from their jurisdiction, and suffered to go at large as usual. The proper reply

5 And ^a if the avenger of blood pursue after him, then they shall not deliver the slayer up into his hand; because he smote his neighbour unwittingly, and hated him not beforetime.

6 And he shall dwell in that city, until he ^a stand before the congregation

^a Num. 35. 12.—^a Num. 35. 12, 25.

doubtless is: (1) That he might still be in danger from the enraged passions of the pursuer. (2) He was to await the issue of another trial. Ver. 6. (3) His detention was probably designed as somewhat of a punishment for the rashness or heedlessness to which the homicide was owing. Something of a penalty was to be paid for carelessness, as well as for crime.—*G. Bush.* That he may dwell among them—We do not know what means of support were provided for the fugitives, but there must have been some, as necessarily there were many poor fugitives, and many whose income depended upon business which their flight destroyed. As the fugitive was safe within the "borders" of the city, (Num. 35. 26, 27,) that is, within the territory which it owned outside the walls, often quite extensive, with many villages, (Josh. 15. 32, 36, 41, 46,) it is probable that he could be put to agricultural or other labor if unable to support himself, in return for which his maintenance was provided by the government.—*F. Johnson.*

5. The avenger of blood—That particular relative whose special duty it was to restore the violated family integrity, who had to redeem not only landed property that had been alienated from the family, (Lev. 25. 25, *sqq.*) or a member of the family that had fallen into slavery, (Lev. 25. 47, *sqq.*) but also the blood that had been taken away from the family by murder.—*Oehler.* They shall not deliver the slayer—Strictly speaking, the elders of the city of refuge never delivered even a criminal directly to the avenger; they delivered him to the elders of his own city, who in turn delivered him to the avenger after he had been taken home; so that no execution took place in the city of refuge. Deut. 19. 11, 12.—*F. Johnson.*

6. Until he stand before the congregation—It is probable that the "congregation" here spoken of was that of his own city, or of the people at large, who were also allowed to constitute a tribunal, and to sit in judgment on the case.—*G. Bush.* The two regulations, "Until he stand before the congregation for judgment," and "until the death of the high-priest,"

for judgment, and until the death of the high-priest that shall be in those days: then shall the slayer return, and come unto his own city, and unto his own house, unto the city from whence he fled.

7 And they ^b appointed ^b Ke'desh in

^b Sanctified.—^b Chap. 21. 32; 1 Chron. 6. 76.

are to be understood, in accordance with the clear explanation given in Num. 35. 24, 25, as meaning that the manslayer was to live in the town till the congregation had pronounced judgment upon the matter, and either given him up to the avenger of blood as a willful murderer, or taken him back to the city of refuge as an unintentional manslayer, in which case he was to remain there till the death of the existing high-priest.—*Keil.* Until the death of the high-priest—The high-priest, as the head and representative of the whole chosen family of sacerdotal mediators, as exclusively intrusted with some of the chief priestly functions, as alone privileged to make yearly atonement within the Holy of Holies, and to gain, from the mysterious Urim and Thummim, special revelations of the will of God, was, pre-eminently, a type of Christ. And thus the death of each successive high-priest presignified that death of Christ by which the captives were to be freed, and the remembrance of transgressions made to cease.—*Speaker's Commentary.* To the unfortunate homicide the death of the high-priest would be a most desirable event; hence the rabbins say, that to induce such fugitives not to pray that it might be hastened, the relatives, and especially the mothers of the high-priests, provided them with food and clothing, thus making their asylum as agreeable as they could. The rabbins say further, that if the fugitive died before the high-priest he was buried in the city of refuge; but that, after the high-priest's death, his bones were delivered to his relatives to be reinterred.—*T. Smith.*

Our High-Priest never dies. He died unto sin once; but he now lives unto God forever. All, then, who repair to him must dwell in him continually; and, indeed, if they are right-minded, they will have no desire to forsake him for a moment.—*T. Smith.*

7. And they appointed—Heb., *sanctified, consecrated*, a term implying the peculiar sacredness which God would have attached, in the minds of his people, to this institution. Accordingly they are sometimes, though not perhaps by the sacred writers, called *sanctuaries*. It may also be remarked of these cities, (1) That

Gal'i-lee in mount Naph'ta-li, and She'-chem⁶ in mount Ephra-im, and ⁷Kir'-jath-ar'ba, which is He'bron, ⁸in the mountain of Ju'dah.

⁶ Chap. 21. 21; 2 Chron. 10. 1. — ⁷ Chap. 14. 15; 21. 11, 13. — ⁸ Chap. 21. 38;

they were located at convenient distances from each other for the benefit of the several tribes. So, of those here mentioned, Kedesh was in the northern, Shechem in the central, and Hebron in the southern district of Canaan. (2) They were all Levitical cities, which appears to have been so ordered that the cases of manslaughter might come under the cognizance of those who might be presumed to be most thoroughly versed in the law of God, and most competent to give judgment according to it, and who, moreover, would be less likely than any others to be swayed by private bias in their decisions.—*G. Bush.* **Kedesh**—An ancient Canaanitish town



allotted to the tribe of Naphtali, and subsequently assigned to the Gershonite Levites. Robinson has doubtless identified the site of this town at *Kades*, a village situated on the western edge of the *Ard-el-Huleh*, the great depressed basin or tract through which the Jordan makes its way into the sea

of Merom. *Kades* is ten English miles north of Safed, and four to the north-west of the upper part of the Sea of Merom. The site is a splendid one, well watered, and surrounded by fertile plains. There are numerous sarcophagi and other ancient remains.—*G. H. Whitney.* **Galilee**—*The ring, circuit, circle.* So called from the form of the district, from the circular plains found in it, or from a circle of cities of which it was composed. Josh. 21. 32; 2 Kings 15. 29. The name is applied in the Old Testament to a small district among the northern mountains of Naphtali; it was not applied to the larger province until much later.—*F. Johnson.* **Mount Naphtali**—A mountainous region near the upper Jordan in the tribal territory of Naphtali.—*F. Johnson.* **Shechem** (*shoulder*)—a town in the valley between Mounts Ebal and Gerizim; called also *Sichem*, *Sychem*, and *Sychar*; in later times it was known as *Neapolis*, and now its Arabic name is *Nablus*. It was thirty-four miles north of Jerusalem, about seven miles south-east of Samaria, and its site is unrivaled for beauty in Palestine. Two mountains paral-

8 And on the other side Jer'dan by Jer'i-cho eastward, they assigned Be'zer⁹ in the wilderness upon the plain out of the tribe of Reu'ben, and ¹⁰Ra'moth

⁹ Luke 1. 39.—¹⁰ Deut. 4. 43; chap. 21. 36; 1 Chron. 6. 78.—1 Kings 22. 3.

lel to each other, Ebal and Gerizim, inclose a beautiful little valley extending east and west, not more than a hundred yards wide at the narrowest part, and widening out in both directions. At the narrowest part of the vale is the town of Nablus, clinging to the slope of Gerizim, the "mountain of blessing." It is at an altitude of 1,950 feet above the sea.—*Schaff.* Shechem was the place where God first appeared to Abraham in Canaan, and where he built his first altar; and where Jacob built an altar; and where Joshua read the Book of the Law to the people, and pronounced the blessings and the cursings; and where afterward Christ declared himself the Messiah to the woman of Samaria. Shechem and its history may be regarded as showing forth God's blessings in Christ to all nations.—*C. Wordsworth.*

In Mount Ephraim—The city is in a valley; but the whole mountainous district in which it is situated is called "Mount Ephraim," because it belonged to the tribe of that name.—*F. Johnson.* **Hebron**—This city, one of the most ancient in the world, is situated among the mountains of Judah, twenty miles south of Jerusalem. It is two thousand eight hundred feet above the Mediterranean, and is the highest town in Palestine, being six hundred feet above Jerusalem. Hence the appropriateness of the expression in chap. 20. 7: "Hebron in the mountain of Judah." It was well known when Abraham sojourned there, nearly four thousand years ago. Its original name was *Kirjath-Arba*, the city of Arba, and it was sometimes called *Mamre*. Ritter argues that the original name was Hebron, and that this name was restored after the expulsion of the Anakim. Chap. 15. 14. It is now called by the Mohammedans *El-Khîlal*, "the Friend," that is, of God—the designation of Abraham, whose tomb, the cave of Machpelah, is still here, one of the historic remains in the Holy Land, of which travelers have no doubts. It is inclosed within a mosque. The present population is about ten thousand.—*D. Steele.*

8. On the other side Jordan—The two and a half tribes east of the Jordan had as many as the western tribes, because they were scattered over a territory nearly as large.—*D. Steele.* **By Jericho**—Literally, *Beyond Jordan, Jericho eastward.* The sense is, the side of Jordan



Hebron.

in Gil'e-ad out of the tribe of Gad, and
 11 Go'lan in Ba'shan out of the tribe of
 Ma-nas'seh.

9 These¹² were the cities appointed
 for all the children of Is'ra-el, and for

¹¹ Chap. 21. 27.

posite from Jericho. These eastern cities were
 appointed by Moses. See at Deut. 4. 41-43.—*D.*
Steele. They assigned—These three cities
 were "severed" by Moses for this purpose at the
 time of the conquest of Gilead and Bashan,
 (Deut. 4. 43;) the statement is repeated here
 merely for the sake of completeness.—*Speaker's*
Commentary. Bezer—The meaning is ore of
 precious metal. A town of Reuben, allotted to
 the Mararite division of the Levites. Deut. 4.
 43; 1 Chron. 6. 78. The site is not known;
 but is possibly the village now called Bur-
 azin, twelve miles north-east of Heshbon.—
F. Johnson. Ramoth in Gilead (*height*
of Gilead).—It was a prominent place on the
 border between Israel and Syria, and an occasion
 of the war in which King Ahab lost his life.
 1 Kings 22. Here, too, King Joram was wounded
 and Jehu was anointed King of Israel. 2 Kings
 8. 28. It has been identified as *Es-Salt*, twenty-
 five miles east of the Jordan, and thirteen miles
 south of the Jabbok. It is now the residence
 of the Turkish governor of the district. Golan
 —It was probably ten or twelve miles north-
 east of the Sea of Galilee, in the center of what
 was afterward known as Gaulanites, though its
 exact site is unknown. Bashan—The name
 may mean *light* or *sandy soil*. This district east
 of the Jordan constituted the northern posses-
 sions of the trans-Jordanic Israelites. It reached
 from Gilead to Hermon, and from the Jordan
 valley to Salchah.—*F. Johnson.* It is for the
 most part a stony, hilly country, made up in the
 northern part as far as Jarmuk, of black basalt,
 and in the southern of limestone, and abounds
 with rich woodlands and pastures.—*E. H.*
Whitney.

As the institution of refuge cities is considered
 as a type of Christ, certain expositors observe a
 significance in the names of their cities. *Kedesh*
 signifies *holy*, and our refuge is the holy Jesus.
Shechem, a shoulder, "and the government is
 upon his shoulder." *Hebron*, fellowship, and
 believers are called into his holy fellowship.
Bezer, a fortification, Jesus the stronghold.
Ramoth, high or exalted, for him hath God exalted.
Golan, joy or exaltation, for in him shall all the
 saints glory.—*Scripture Treasury.*

9. And for the stranger—A foreshadowing
 of the provision for the salvation of the Gentiles

the stranger that sojourneth among
 them, that whosoever killeth *any* person
 at unawares might flee thither, and not
 die by the hand of the avenger of blood,
 until he stood before the congregation.

¹² Num. 35. 15.

through Christ.—*D. Steele.* Until he stood—
 The judges and elders of the people, in trying
 civil and criminal causes, always sat, the per-
 sons who came for judgment, or who were tried,
 always stood.—*G. Bush.*

Notice four features of the sinner's refuge :
 (1) There is no other. The Israelite fleeing from
 the avenger of blood might reach some other city,
 but there was no safety there. And there is
 "none other Name . . . whereby we must be
 saved."

"Other refuge have I none,
 Hangs my helpless soul on Thee."

(2) It is accessible to all. The cities of refuge
 were located at different spots, so that no place
 might be very far from one of them. And of
 Jesus we may truly say, "Thou art near, O
 Lord!" (3) We must not leave it. The man-
 slayer straying from the city of refuge ran the
 risk of being slain. See John 15. 1-8 on "abid-
 ing in Christ." (4) Within it the safety is perfect.
 We can sing "Safe in the arms of Jesus," who
 says, "They shall never perish, neither shall any
 pluck them out of my hand."—*E. Stock.*

Authorities to be Consulted.

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 History of the Bible, chap. xii. See Lesson
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Practical Root Thoughts.

[CHRIST THE REFUGE.]

1. Christ as a refuge is divinely appointed for
 mankind. Vers. 1, 2.
2. Christ is a refuge from the vengeance of
 the offended law. Ver. 3.
3. Christ as a refuge requires action, endeavor,
 seeking on the part of those who would be saved.
 Vers. 3, 4.
4. Christ is a safe and secure refuge for those
 who seek him. Ver. 5.
5. Christ as a refuge is lasting and eternal,
 while our high-priest stands before the throne.
 Ver. 6.
6. Christ as a refuge is accessible to all the
 needy. Ver. 7.
7. Christ as a refuge is universal, not only
 for the innocent, but for the guilty.

B. C. 1427.]

LESSON VII.

[Aug. 12.]

THE LAST DAYS OF JOSHUA.—Josh. 24. 14-29.

GOLDEN TEXT.—Choose you this day whom ye will serve. JOSH. 24. 15.

TIME.—1427 B. C., (date of Joshua's death.)

PLACE.—Shechem, between Mounts Gerizim and Ebal.

CONNECTING LINKS.—(1) The return of the warriors from the east of Jordan, and the building of the altar of witness. Josh. 22. 1-34. (2) Joshua's warning to the people. Josh. 23. 1-16.

INTRODUCTION.—The armies had now done their work, and were dispersed, or were ready to disperse, to their several inheritances; and the military authority of their general was consequently at an end. Thus there is no inconsistency, as some have imagined, between the earlier half of the book, where Joshua alone is mentioned as bearing rule, and the latter, where he is represented as acting in conjunction with others. The latter years of his life, indeed, were probably passed in retirement at Timnath-serak, whence he would seem to have emerged in extreme old age to meet the princes and the people in the great gathering at Shechem, (chaps. 23, 24,) and to employ once more and finally the authority which he had, as the last survivor but one of a mighty generation, and as the hero of Israel's greatest triumphs, in order by its influence to engage his people more firmly and closely in their rightful allegiance to God.—*Speaker's Commentary*. What a picture for the artist's pencil! There is the venerable form of the heroic soldier to whom under God the people owe the conquest of the land, the last link, Caleb only excepted, of the generation who had come out of the land of Egypt, and around him are gathered the heads of the tribes, to listen once more to his sage counsel and advice. Eleazar the high-priest is there, and Phinehas his son, and doubtless Caleb is there in his green old age, and perhaps Othniel, with many others. And Joshua addresses them, and, reminding them of what God has done for them, exhorts them to courage and to constancy, and warns them of the consequences of departing from the Lord.—*T. Smith*.

14 Now ¹therefore fear the LORD, and serve him in ²sincerity and in truth: and put ³away the gods which

your fathers served on the other side of the flood, and in ⁴E'gypt; and serve ye the LORD.

¹ Deut. 10. 12; 1 Sam. 12. 24. — ² Gen. 17. 1; 20. 5; Deut. 18. 13;

Psa. 119. 1; 2 Cor. 1. 12; Eph. 6. 24. — ³ Lev. 17. 7. — ⁴ Ezek. 20. 7.

14. Now therefore.—The address of Joshua to Israel has thus far been occupied with a recital of the leading events of their national history, events going to show, in the most striking manner, the interposition of the divine hand in their behalf. He would thus lay a foundation for that deep sense of obligation and obedience which he aims in the remainder of his discourse to impress upon their minds. From this point, therefore, he begins a practical application of the various facts he had before enumerated, turning the whole into a powerful appeal to the consciences and the hearts of his hearers.—*G. Bush*. Fear the Lord and serve him.—*Professedly* the Israelites were worshipers of the Lord Jehovah, and of him only, but *in heart* they still clung to the gods of Chaldea and of Egypt, and hence Joshua here exhorts them to serve the Lord in *sincerity and truth*.—*T. Smith*. In uprightness, in integrity, not in pretense and outward semblance only, but in reality and in truth. Do not serve or worship other gods in private, while in public, in the eyes of men, you maintain the form of the worship of the true God.—*G. Bush*. Put away the gods.—But it is scarcely supposable, that if

Joshua meant to warn them merely against tendencies to idolatry he would have used the words here employed, and those still stronger ones in verse 23, *Put away the strange gods which are among you*, the very words used by Jacob when his household gave up their strange gods, and he buried them at Shechem. Gen. 35. 2. Better, then, to understand that many of the Hebrews had still in their houses teraphim, the gods which the ancient fathers worshiped beyond the Euphrates. Laban had them in his family, (Gen. 30. 19,) and Rachel carried them off, and they were probably the strange gods buried at Shechem. Gen. 35. 2-4. We again meet with them in the days of the Judges, (Judges 17. 5; 18. 20,) and in the time of David, and even in his house, (1 Samuel 19. 13,) and also in the time of Josiah, who tried to put them away. 2 Kings 23. 24.—*D. Steele*. Which your fathers served.—Jewish tradition asserts that Abraham, while in Ur of the Chaldees, was persecuted for his abhorrence of idolatry, and hence was called away by God from his native land, as is mentioned in verse 8. The reference in the text to the original state of those who were the forefathers of the

15 And if it seem evil unto you to serve the LORD, choose you this day whom ye will serve; whether the gods which your fathers served, that *were* on the other side of the flood, or ⁶ the gods of the Am'o-rites, in whose land ye dwell; ⁷ but as for me and my house, we will serve the LORD.

16 And the people answered and said, God forbid that we should forsake the LORD, to serve other gods;

17 For the LORD our God, *he it is* that brought us up and our fathers out

of the land of E'gypt, from the house of bondage, and which did those great signs in our sight, and preserved us in all the way wherein we went, and among all the people through whom we passed:

18 And the LORD drave out from before us all the people, even the Am'o-rites which dwelt in the land: *therefore* will we also serve the LORD; for he *is* our God.

19 And Josh'u-a said unto the people, ⁷ Ye cannot serve the LORD: for he *is* an

⁶ Exod. 23. 24; Deut. 13. 7; Judg. 6. 10.

⁶ Gen. 18. 19.—⁷ Matt. 6. 24.

nation, is made to show that they were no better than others; God chose them not for their excellencies but of his own mere motion. — *Speaker's Commentary.* On the other side of the flood—Beyond the great River Euphrates in the land of Mesopotamia. In Egypt—This fact is nowhere else expressly asserted respecting the Israelites in Egypt, although Ezek. 23. 3, 8, and Acts 7. 42, 43, go strongly in confirmation of Joshua's words. Considering the idolatrous tendencies of human nature, it is not surprising that they should have suffered themselves to become infected with an evil so every-where rife around them, and it was, perhaps, in part owing to this that their sufferings were so aggravated and embittered in that "house of bondage." — *G. Bush.*

15. If it seem evil—Undesirable. Choose you—The real object of Joshua was to renew and confirm the covenant which had already been made with God. Not without cause, therefore, does he give them freedom of choice, that they may not afterward pretend to have been under compulsion, when they bound themselves by their own consent. Meanwhile, to impress them with a feeling of shame, he declares that he and his house will persevere in the worship of God.—*Calvin.* Whom ye will serve—Joshua assumes an important truth—man cannot be godless; if he repudiates the true God he will fall under the baleful influence of some false religion. He cannot divest himself of his religious nature. — *D. Steele.* Gods of the Amorites—The Amorites, being one of the most powerful of the Canaanite tribes, are here made to represent them all. As for me and my house—This declaration of their venerated leader, while devoid of the least air of dictation, and apparently leaving them the most unrestrained liberty of choice, was in fact the most powerful argument he could use to influence their minds

in the direction he wished. For the force of example is in proportion to the depth of respect and estimation in which an individual is held, and he could not fail to perceive that the reverence with which he was regarded would give to his example a weight and authority almost amounting to absolute law.—*G. Bush.*

We have not the liberty to choose whether we will serve or no; all the liberty we have is to choose our master.—*Bishop Sanderson.*

Those that are bound for heaven must be willing to swim against the stream, and must not do as the *most* do, but as the *best* do.—*Henry.*

16-18. God forbid—By an emphatic expression, denoting the greatest dread and detestation imaginable, they show that they startle at the idea of apostatizing from God, as if it would imply their being utterly lost to justice, gratitude, honor, and every generous feeling.—*G. Bush.* Forsake the Lord—*Jehovah*, in the original, the name by which God revealed himself to the Israelites. Hence they say, the Lord (*Jehovah*) our God. Other nations had their gods, Israel alone had knowledge of the true God. He it is that brought us up—The memory of God's mercies to Israel, and of the wonders which he had wrought in their behalf, is yet fresh in their minds. Those great signs—The miracles in the wilderness, as the manna, the smitten rock, the guidance of the cloud, and the giving of the law: and afterward those wrought during the conquest of Canaan. Drave out from before us—There is reason to believe that not long before the Israelites entered Canaan, the strength of the native tribes in that land was greatly broken by invasions and pestilence. Hints of this are found in several places in the Pentateuch.

19, 20. Ye cannot serve the Lord—*Ye cannot serve Jehovah*, etc., in the state of mind in

⁸holy God; he *is* a jealous God; ⁹he will not forgive your transgressions nor your sins.

20 If ¹⁰ye forsake the LORD, and serve strange gods, ¹¹then he will turn and do you hurt, and consume you, after that he hath done you good.

21 And the people said unto Josh'u-a, Nay; but we will serve the LORD.

22 And Josh'u-a said unto the people, Ye *are* witnesses against yourselves that

¹²ye have chosen you the LORD, to serve him. And they said, *We are witnesses.*

23 Now therefore ¹³put away, *said he*, the strange gods which *are* among you, and incline your heart unto the LORD God of Is'ra-el.

24 And the people said unto Josh'u-a, The LORD our God will we serve, and his voice will we obey.

25 So Josh'u-a ¹⁴made a covenant with

⁸ Lev. 19. 2; 1 Sam. 6. 20; Psa. 99. 5, 9; Isa. 5. 16.—⁹ Exod. 23. 21.
¹¹ Isa. 63. 10; Acts 7. 42.—¹² Psa. 119. 173.

¹⁰ 2 Chron. 15. 2; Ezra 8. 22; Isa. 1. 28; Jer. 17. 13.—
¹³ Gen. 35. 2; 1 Sam. 7. 3.—¹⁴ Exod. 15. 25; 2 Kings 11. 17.

which ye are at present, or by your own resolution only, and without the assistance of divine grace, without solid and serious conversion from all idols, and without true repentance and faith.—

J. D. Michaelis. Finding them now animated by a glowing zeal, forward and abundant in their professions, and unconsciously prone to trust to their own strength, Joshua, in these words, designs to administer a wholesome check to their ardor by setting impressively before them the holy and sin-avenging character of the God with whom they had to do, and the fearful consequences of disobedience and apostasy.—*G. Bush.*

He is a holy God—To take a religious vow, to enter into covenant with God, to promise deliberately allegiance to his throne, is a most solemn and momentous act; for God is a jealous God, and requires of all his people unbroken fidelity to their engagements; nor will he fail to visit with severity every breach of promise.—*T. Smith.* **He is a jealous God**—He demands, like a husband, the undivided affection and service of the people who have avowed their fidelity to him.—*D. Steele.* Joshua also here states another important truth, namely, that God will not be served *with* any thing else. The Israelites did not intend to forsake God; but they imagined that they might serve strange gods; the gods of Canaan, *with* God, the God of Israel. Joshua warns them that God is a jealous God, (verse 19,) and will have no rivals or partners with himself.—*C. Wordsworth.* **Will not forgive**—*Will not tolerate.* The meaning is, not that God is implacable, or that he would not show mercy to the penitent, however great their sins, but that *they* could not afford to offend against him with impunity, that he would certainly punish their transgressions.—*G. Bush.*

The same infallible authority which assures us that the yoke of Christ is easy and his burden light, assures us that the gate is strait, the way narrow, that leads to life, and that there is need of *striving* as well as *seeking* to enter in.—*G. Bush.*
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If ye . . . serve strange gods—Hebrew, “gods of the stranger, or of the foreigner.” **He will turn**—Not in himself or in his dispositions toward his creatures, for we are elsewhere told that with him there is “no variableness nor the least *shadow of turning*,” but the character of his dispensations, the course of his providence toward them, should be entirely changed, in view of the change in their conduct toward him.—*G. Bush.*

21, 22. We will serve—This shows that they understood the words of Joshua to imply no moral inability on their side, and notwithstanding his statement of difficulties, and the seeming discouragements which he throws in their way, but which are really intended to quicken their resolutions, they declare a firm and fixed purpose of obedience.—*G. Bush.* **Ye are witnesses against yourselves**—This solemn profession will be a swift witness against you if hereafter you apostatize from God.—*M. Pool.*

23, 24. Put away . . . the strange gods—(See note on verse 14.) The words import that there really were among the people, even in Joshua's days, those who were idolaters in secret, as there were in the days of Jacob before him and of Samuel after him.—*Speaker's Commentary.* **Incline your heart**—By the free act of your will in the use of the power by God's grace conferred upon all.—*D. Steele.* **The people said**—Repeating the vow already made, and making it more binding. **His voice**—As expressed in the written law, and in the spoken words of his messengers. **Will we obey**—A people who, through all the wonders of God's care, could still need an injunction to put away idols, would be likely soon to break even so solemn a promise as this; and no sooner was their leader buried than their vows were forgotten.

25. Joshua made a covenant—*Cut a covenant*; alluding to the *sacrifice* usually offered

the people that day, and set them a statute and an ordinance in She'chem.

26 And Josh'u-a ¹⁵ wrote these words in the book of the law of God, and took ¹⁶ a great stone, and ¹⁷ set it up there under an oak that *was* by the sanctuary of the LORD.

27 And Josh'u-a said unto all the peo-

¹⁵ Deut. 31. 24.—¹⁶ Judg. 9. 6.—¹⁷ Gen. 28. 18; chap. 4. 3.

on such occasions. But whether the ordinary rites were performed at this time is uncertain. The use of this term does not perhaps necessarily imply that they were. The ceremonies usual in *forming* and in *renewing* a covenant might not have been the same.—*G. Bush*. **A statute and an ordinance**—A statute binding the Israelites to observe the law, and an ordinance giving them a title to expect that, on this condition, the Lord Jehovah would be faithful to his promises.—*T. Smith*. **In Shechem**—[See note, Lesson VI, verse 7, on Shechem.] Shechem, and not Shiloh, was chosen for this event, because it stood between the mountains Ebal and Gerizim, where the covenant was first renewed, soon after they had entered Canaan. The same spot was to be the witness of the last renewal of the covenant before Joshua's death, which had witnessed the first renewal of it after he had become the successor of Moses.—*T. Smith*. There could then be no scene more fitting for the solemn renewal on the part of the people of that covenant with God which had been on His part so signally and so fully kept. The spot itself suggested the allusion to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, etc., in Joshua's address; and its associations could not but give peculiar force and moving effect to his appeals.—*Speaker's Commentary*.

26. **Wrote these words**—A description of all that occurred at Shechem in this solemn renewal of the covenant. This was done in order that a written document might be preserved as a witness against the people should they ever transgress the divine law. This chapter contains probably the substance of that ancient document.—*D. Steele*. **Set it up there under an oak**—The spot where Abraham and Jacob had sacrificed and worshiped, and which might well be regarded by their posterity as a holy place or sanctuary. Perhaps the very altar of Abraham and Jacob was still remaining.—*Speaker's Commentary*. **By the sanctuary of the Lord**—Not the place of the ark and the tabernacle, for these were at Shiloh. The sanctuary here referred to was none other than the

spot which Abraham had consecrated to the worship of the Lord Jehovah, under a venerable oak, when he passed through the land journeying toward the south, and on which Jacob also erected an altar, and afterward buried all the strange gods of his household. Memorable, then, was that spot in the history of the chosen race, and most fitting to be the scene of this very solemn and momentous engagement.—*T. Smith*. **Took a great stone**—According to a custom common in the Orient, rearing a monument, either with or without an inscription, to remind the people of their vow.

28 So Josh'u-a let the people depart, every man unto his own inheritance.

¹⁸ Gen. 31. 48; Deut. 31. 19.—¹⁹ Deut. 32. 1.

spot which Abraham had consecrated to the worship of the Lord Jehovah, under a venerable oak, when he passed through the land journeying toward the south, and on which Jacob also erected an altar, and afterward buried all the strange gods of his household. Memorable, then, was that spot in the history of the chosen race, and most fitting to be the scene of this very solemn and momentous engagement.—*T. Smith*. **Took a great stone**—According to a custom common in the Orient, rearing a monument, either with or without an inscription, to remind the people of their vow.

27. **It hath heard**—In the language of poetry things inanimate are often said to see and hear and speak, and thus was this stone said to have heard the words of God, and as the people looked upon it, they were to remember that, if they denied their Lord, it would be a witness against them of the heinousness of their sin.—*T. Smith*. **A witness unto you**—May he not (in speaking of the stone set up under the oak of Jacob, near the sanctuary of the Lord, to be a witness between him and his people, and in saying, "This stone hath heard all the words of the Lord") have made, perhaps, *unconsciously*, a prophetic preannouncement of him who is *the Stone*, the *Corner-stone*, elect, precious to the faithful, (Psa. 118. 22; Isa. 28. 16; Eph. 2. 20; 1 Pet. 2. 6,) and yet a stumbling-stone to the ungodly, (Isa. 8. 14; Rom. 9. 32; 1 Pet. 2. 7, 8,) and who is set for the fall and rise of many in Israel, (Luke 2. 34;) and who is also the true and faithful *Witness*, (Rev. 1. 5; 3. 14;) and who hears all the words of the Lord, and declares them to the world, (John 15. 15; 17. 8, 26.) Did he not speak of *Christ*?—*C. Wordsworth*.

28. **Joshua let the people depart**—With the renewal of the covenant Joshua had ended his vocation. He did not formally lay down his office, because there was no immediate successor who had been appointed by God. The ordinary rulers of the congregation were enough when once they were settled in Canaan, namely, the elders as heads and judges of the nation,

29 And it came to pass after these things, that Josh'u-a the son of Nun, the

together with the high-priest, who represented the nation in its relation to God, and could obtain for it the revelation of the will of God through the right of the Urim and Thummin. —*Keil*.

29. After these things—How long he lived after the entrance of Israel into Canaan we have no means of determining. Lightfoot thinks it was about seventeen years, but the Jewish chronologers generally fix it at twenty-seven or twenty-eight. **Joshua . . . the servant of the Lord.**—There is no mention of any public mourning at his death, as there was for Moses and Aaron, and his only epitaph was, in effect, couched in the brief terms, *The servant of the Lord*. This, however, comprehended the sum of the highest eulogiums that could be bestowed on his character.—*G. Bush*.

Joshua's character.—If courage be fixed upon as the leading feature in the character of Joshua it is by no means the only remarkable feature. It was intrepidity very distinctly and directly built upon faith. The call to him was "be strong and of a good courage," but it came recommended by the promise, "I will be with thee: I will not fail thee nor forsake thee," (chap. 1. 5, 6.) Joshua obeyed the call unhesitatingly and to the end, but it was because he trusted wholly in the promise. Hence, along with his soldierly qualities are found others seldom present in the same man. He combines justice as a magistrate with gentleness as a man, (chap. 7. 19.) spirit as a ruler, with temper and discretion in dealing with the arrogant and exacting, (chap. 17. 14, *sqq.*) diligence and equity in disposing of the fruits of victory with a complete unselfishness as regards himself. Perhaps conspicuous above all is his humility. From first to last his valor and his victories are referred to God as their giver. Of his personal work in the achievements of his life there

servant of the LORD, died, *being* an hundred and ten years old.

is in his last addresses scarcely one word.—*Speaker's Commentary*.

Authorities to be Consulted.

Stanley's Jewish Church, Lecture xii. Thornley Smith's Joshua and his Times, p. 273. Smith's Old Testament History, chap. xvi. Ewald's History of Israel, vol. i, 266. Kitto's History of the Bible, chap. xii. Geikie's Hours with the Bible, vol. ii. On the character of Joshua see the Speaker's Commentary, Introduction to the Book of Joshua. Foster's Cyclo-pedia of Illustration [Figures marked with a star refer to poetical quotations]—ver. 15: *379, *583, *584, 1257, *1875, 2205, 2282, 2855, 3571, 3572, 4701, 5360, 7910, 8648, 11080.

Practical Root Thoughts.

[THE SERVICE OF GOD.]

1. The service of God should rest on a filial fear and reverence for God. Ver. 14.
2. It should be an undivided service, sincere and single-hearted. Ver. 14.
3. It should be voluntary service, arising from an individual choice. Ver. 15.
4. It should be a grateful service, inspired by the recognition of God's goodness and grace. Vers. 16, 17, 18.
5. It should be a faithful service, keeping in mind God's jealousy over his people's love. Ver. 19.
6. It should be a steadfast service, never forsaking the Lord for idols. Ver. 20.
7. It should be an obedient service, having respect to God's commandments. Ver. 24.
8. It should be a covenant service, having regard to our own pledges of fidelity. Vers. 25-28.

ISRAEL FORSAKING GOD.—JUDG. 2. 6-16.

GOLDEN TEXT.—And they forsook the Lord God of their fathers.—JUDG. 1. 12.

TIME.—1427 B. C., the year of Joshua's death.

PLACE.—The land of Israel.

CONNECTING LINKS.—This lesson contains a general statement of Israelite history after the death of Joshua, during the period of the Judges.

INTRODUCTION.—*The Book of Judges.*—The Book of Judges consists of three divisions. (1) The Preface, which extends to chap. 3. 6. (2) The Main Narrative of the exploits of the Judges, beginning at chap. 3. 7. and ending at chap. 16. 31. (3) The Appendix, containing two detached narratives; the one, of the establishment of the worship of Micah's graven image at Dan; the second, of the civil war with Benjamin.

Chaps. 17-21. To these may be added the Book of Ruth, containing another detached narrative, which anciently was included under the title of Judges, to which book the first verse shows that it properly belongs.—*Speaker's Commentary*. The Book of Joshua is the history of a conqueror; the Book of Judges that of a people for the first time in possession. Hitherto, Israel had always been in a condition of unrest and movement, first enslaved, then wandering in the desert, finally undergoing the hardships of the camp and conquest; the Book of Judges exhibits the nation in the first period of its life as a settled, possessing, and peaceable people. Hitherto, the nation, like a minor, had been authoritatively directed by its guardian and friend; the Book of Judges opens at the moment in which the people itself is to assume the administration of its affairs in accordance with the sacerdotal and civil constitution which has been framed for it.—*P. Cassel*. This section, containing a general account of the period of the Judges, is naturally introduced by a connection with the account of Joshua's last labors and death as recorded in Josh. 24. 28-31. This introductory passage serves to show that while Joshua lived, and for some time after, the nation deserved no such rebuke as the angel gave at Bochim, (Judges 2. 1-5), and hence this passage cannot be a direct continuation, chronologically, of the narrative which precedes; for here it is expressly declared that the people served the Lord all the days of Joshua and of the elders that survived him. The reader must bear in mind that this book is not so much a history in the chronological order of events, as a series of historical paintings for the illustration of a few great principles of the Divine administration. The fidelity of Israel during the days of Joshua and the elders is here presented as a notable contrast to their apostasy from God in the days immediately ensuing. The record of this apostasy is necessary to prove the fulfillment of Jehovah's words in the third verse. The enormity of their disobedience is enhanced by the consideration that it took place in the promised land, into which they had been introduced by the miraculous interposition of Jehovah.—*D. Steele*.

6 And when Josh'u-a had let the people go, the children of Is'ra-el went every man unto his inheritance to possess the land.

7 And the people served the LORD all the days of Josh'u-a, and all the days of the elders that ^aoutlived Josh'u-a, who had seen all the great

works of the LORD that he did for Is'ra-el.

8 And Josh'u-a the son of Nun, the servant of the LORD, died, *being* an hundred and ten years old.

9 And they buried him in the border of his inheritance in Tim'nath-he'eres, in the mount of Ephra-

^a Prolonged days

after Joshua.

6. Joshua had let the people go (See notes, Lesson VII, verse 28.)—He appointed no successor to the supreme authority, and the separate republics, under the control of their own chieftains, and other local officers, assumed the administration of affairs. The Utopia of the law-giver commenced its political existence; the land of milk and honey began to yield its fruits to a simple, free, and pious race of husbandmen, a people worthy of its blessings; but one fatal act of disobedience, the desisting from the war before their enemies were rooted out, prevented its permanence, and the land which was intended to be a scene of peace and freedom, before long became that of war and servitude.—*H. H. Milman*.

7. The elders—They were not actually chosen by the people, but were the born princes and representatives of a people possessing class distinctions, and were arranged in an order corresponding to that of the families themselves; while, in cases of ultimate appeal, the authority of the elders yielded to that of the entire great assembly.—*H. Ewald*. Who had seen all the great works of the Lord—These elders would

be all that were old enough to take part in the wars of Canaan, according to Judges 3. 1, 2; and, therefore, reckoning from the age of twenty to seventy, we cannot be far wrong in assigning a period of about fifty years from the entrance into Canaan to the death of the elders, or twenty years after the death of Joshua, supposing his government to have lasted thirty years.—*Speaker's Commentary*. Their presence and testimony kept the Hebrew nation from degeneracy and backsliding, as the presence of the apostles, eye-witnesses of Christ's majesty, preserved the Christian Church from corruption and heresy.—*D. Steele*.

8, 9. The son of Nun—See note, Lesson I. verse 1. Died—See note, Lesson VII, verse 29. They buried him—The importance attached to places of sepulture breaks out in this notice of the grave of Joshua. Compare Josh. 24. 32, 33; Gen. 23. 19; 25. 9, 10; 49. 29-32; 50. 13; Jer. 22. 18, 19; Matt. 27. 60; Acts 2. 29. This same feeling exists in full force in the East to this day.—*Speaker's Commentary*. In Timnath-heres—This place is called, in Josh. 24. 30, "Tinnath-serah." By transposing the letters

im, on the north side of the hill Ga'ash.

10 And also all that generation were gathered unto their fathers. And there arose another generation after them, which ¹knew not the LORD, nor yet

¹ Exod. 5. 2; 1 Sam. 2. 12; 1 Chron. 23. 9; Jer. 9. 3; 22. 16; Josh. 24. 20;

of the last word, it becomes, as here, "Heres," which signifies *the sun*, and it is not improbable, as the Jews imagine, that it was so called by reason of some memorial, connected with his sepulcher, of the sun's miraculously standing still at his command.—*G. Bush*. Christian tradition points to a *Tibneh* (not that under *Timnath*) on the Roman road from Jerusalem to Antipatris, and some fourteen and a half miles north-north-west of Jerusalem, as the site of ancient Timnath-serah. Jerome speaks of this place as on the border between the possessions of Dan and Judah. North side of the hill Gaash—South of *Tibneh*, which is identified as Timnath-serah, is a hill, upon the north side of which are tombs: hence it is supposed to be "the hill Gaash."—*Schaff*.

10. All that generation—*That is*, the main body of those who were grown-up men at the time of the conquest of Canaan.—*Speaker's Commentary*. Were gathered to their fathers—In the grave with their ancestors. One generation goes, another comes. Joshua, who had died, weary with years, was followed to the grave by his younger contemporaries.—*P. Cassel*. There arose another generation—The transition from that low faith, grounded on the senses, to that higher faith, grounded on testimony, is always a critical period.—*D. Steele*. Which knew not the Lord—Had no practical or experimental knowledge of him; no deep or lively impression of his goodness; no affectionate, grateful, or devout sense of the wondrous manifestations of his power in their behalf.—*G. Bush*. It had already grown up in the land which the fathers had won. It inherited from them only possession and enjoyment. It already felt itself at home in the life of abundance to which it was born. It could not be counted as a reproach to them that they had not seen the mighty works of God in connection with the conquest; but in the triteness of possession they utterly failed to acknowledge their indebtedness for it to God.—*P. Cassel*.

11. Did evil in the sight of the Lord—This is the regular phrase for falling into idolatry through this Book of Judges, and through all the historical books. It occurs seven times

the works which he had done for Is'ra-el.

11 And the children of Is'ra-el did evil in the sight of the LORD, and served Ba'al-im:

12 And they ²forsook the LORD God

Gal. 4. 8; 2 Thess. 1. 8; Titus 1. 16.—² Deut. 31. 16; 1 Chron. 28. 9.

in Judges, as descriptive of the seven apostasies of Israel, which drew down upon them the seven servitudes under (1) Chushan-rishathaim, (2) Eglon, (3) Jabin, (4) Midian, (5) the tyranny of Abimelech, (6) the Ammonites, (7) the Philistines.—*Speaker's Commentary*. This was not the first time that Israel was seduced to this worship, (see Num. 25. 3-5,) nor was it the last, for this form of pagan *cultus* continued in Israel up to the time of Samuel, at whose rebuke it was renounced. 1 Sam. 7. 4. It broke out again like a deadly contagion, and became the religion of the court and people under Ahab. It had the advantage of being a gorgeous ceremonial, dazzling the senses of the ignorant masses. It captivated many of the Hebrews during the reign of the kings.—*D. Steele*. Served Baalim—The plural *Baalim* is a general term employed to denote all false deities, and is synonymous with the expression "other gods" in the clause "other gods of the gods of the nations round about them," (the Israelites.) This use of the term *Baalim* arose from the fact that Baal was the chief male deity of the Canaanites and all the nations of Hither Asia, and was simply worshipped by the different nations with peculiar modifications, and therefore designated by various distinctive epithets.—*Keil*.

Practical infidelity follows swiftly upon the heels of speculative infidelity. Decay of morals inevitably follows decay of faith. A curious proof of this fact is imbedded in almost every language in those words whose primary signification implies unbelief, and whose secondary meaning is expressive of practical wickedness. For example, *miscreant* first signified a *misbeliever*, then a *vile wretch*; the word *unprincipled* first had reference to *speculative religious opinions*, then passed over into its more common signification of *profligate and vicious*.—*D. Steele*.

12. They forsook the Lord God—This was one of the highest aggravations of their offense; they forsook the God who brought them out of Egypt, a place in which they endured the most grievous oppression, and were subjected to the most degrading servitude, from which they never could have rescued themselves; and they were delivered by such a signal dis-

of their fathers, which brought them out of the land of E'gypt, and followed ³ other gods, of the gods of the people that *were* round about them, and ⁴ bowed themselves unto them, and provoked the LORD to anger.

³ Deut. 6. 14.—⁴ Exod. 20. 5.—⁵ Chap. 3. 8; 9 Chron. 7. 19; —⁷ Chap. 3. 8; 4. 2;

play of the power, justice, and mercy of God, as should never have been forgotten, because the most stupendous that had ever been exhibited. They forsook *him*, and served idols as destitute of real *being* as of influence and power.—*A. Clarke*. Followed . . . the gods of the people . . . round about—The tribes seem to have adopted the dangerous measure of entering into terms with their enemies, and permitting them to reside in the land on the payment of tribute. Intermarriage soon followed, and led to community of religious worship. The Israelites strayed, without scruple, into the shady groves, where the voluptuous rites of the Canaanites were held, or attended at their gay and splendid festivals. By degrees they began to incorporate the two religions, and to pay indiscriminate homage to the symbolic representations of the powers of nature, particularly of the sun and moon, as well as to their own peculiar God, the Creator of the universe; and throughout the period of the Judges down to the time of David, among those who repudiated the grosser idolatry of Polytheism, there lingered a kind of idolatrous Monotheism, far below the sublime Mosaic worship of Jehovah. Some who preserved inviolate the first commandment of the Law lived in almost unconscious infringement of the second: they worshiped on the high places, they worshiped symbols or emblems of the great "*I am*," the Invisible, the Eternal.—*H. H. Milman*.

Truly, when once the granite rock on which the Church is reared has crumbled away, all other foundations crumble after it, and nothing remains but a nation of cowards and voluptuaries.—*B. Abeken*.

13. Served Baal and Ashtaroth.—As God originally created man male and female, so Canaanitish mythology seems to have embodied these conceptions in its system of worship. The masculine life-giving force of nature was worshiped under the names of Baal, *Lord*; Chemosh, *governor*; Hadad, *the only one*; Moloch, *king*; or simply *El, god*; the feminine receptive faculty was adored as Ashtoreth, Baalith, or Atargath. Thus the chief deities consisted of

13 And they forsook the LORD, and served Ba'al and Ash'ta-roth.

14 And ⁵ the anger of the LORD was hot against Is'ra-el, and ⁶ he delivered them into the hands of spoilers that spoiled them, and ⁷ he sold them into

Psa. 78. 58-62; 89. 30; 106. 40; Isa. 1. 28 —⁶ 2 Kings 17. 20. Psa. 44. 12; Isa. 50. 1.

an apotheosis of the generative forces and laws of nature; an adoration of the objects in which those forces were seen, and where they appeared most active. Such an origin was, it may easily be seen, the source of the grossest sensuality. Debauchery was consecrated by religion.—*D. Steele*. **Ashtaroth**—Plural of *Ashtoreth*, in



Heads of Baal and Ashtoreth.

Greek *Astarte*. Side by side with these varying conceptions of Baal were corresponding ones of his consort, Ashtoreth. Where he is sun-god, she is goddess of the moon; where he is Priapus, she is Venus; where he is Zeus, she is his royal partner, Hera. And from these multiform representations of the two chief deities they came to be spoken of often in the plural, and instead of Baal and Ashtoreth, we have Baalim and Ashtaroth.—*D. Steele*.

14. The anger of the Lord was hot.—Anger and love are feelings of the divine as well as of the human mind, but not irregular and misdirected, as they so often appear in men. They are not evil in themselves, and can only become so by becoming uncontrolled or directed toward wrong objects. Infinite wisdom never errs in either of these ways, and God's essential antagonism against sin and sinners is one of the perfections of his holy nature. And such righteous indignation the Scriptures properly call *anger*.—*D. Steele*. **He delivered them.**—The previous successes of Israel had been gained only by the favor of God, and when that favor was withdrawn the nation was utterly weak. We are not told the immediate occasions of their inefficiency, but we can have no doubt that there were tribal divisions and jealousies, a spirit of

the hands of their enemies round about, so that ^a they could not any longer stand before their enemies.

15 Whithersoever they went out, the hand of the LORD was against them for evil, as the LORD had said, and ^a as the

^a Lev. 26, 37; Josh. 7. 12.—^a Lev. 26. 14, 34; Deut. 28. 15-68.

insubordination, (verse 17,) and that decadence of heroic patriotism which ever attends a general decadence of religion. The popular and somewhat loose government of Israel during the period of the Judges, depended for its efficiency upon the moral tone of the people, for a nation of true worshipers it was perhaps the best; but it had too little organization to bind the nation together in a period distinguished for a factious spirit.—*F. Johnson.* When Israel forsakes God and his law, it loses the basis of its nationality. With God and God's law, and through them, it is a people; without them it has neither law nor national power.—*P. Cassel.* Into the hands of spoilers—Predatory hordes, ruthless robbers, and hostile armies, who plundered their possessions and made merchandise of their persons.—*D. Steele.* The conquest was over, but the upheavings of the conquered population still continued. The ancient inhabitants, like the Saxons under the Normans, still retained their hold on large tracts, or on important positions throughout the country. The neighboring powers still looked on the newcomers as an easy prey to incursion and devastation, if not to actual subjugation. Against these enemies, both from without and from within, but chiefly from within, a constant struggle had to be maintained with all the dangers, adventures, and trials incident to such a state, a war of independence such as was not to occur again till the struggle of the Maccabees against the Greek kings, or even of the last insurgents against the Romans.—*Dean Stanley.* Sold them into the hands of their enemies—This term *sell* is used in a broad sense for renouncing ownership, and delivering over into the hands of an enemy. The punishment involved in being sold was a payment to the Divine justice. They failed to render due service to their only true Lord, and he, their rightful owner, sold them into a miserable slavery. Thus he vindicated the righteousness of his government, and for lack of service enforced a penalty.—*D. Steele.* Their enemies round about—On the south were the predatory Ishmaelites, the Arabians and Amalekites; on the east were the Moabites and the Ammonites; north, were the Hivites and Hit-

Lord had sworn unto them; and they were greatly distressed.

16 Nevertheless ¹⁰ the LORD raised up judges, which ^b delivered them out of the hand of those that spoiled them.

¹⁰ Chap. 3. 9; 1 Sam. 12. 11; Acts 13. 20.—^b Saved.

tites; and on the west the Philistines, whose yoke was latest, heaviest, and longest of all laid upon Israel.

15. Whithersoever they went out—Not only in their military expeditions against their enemies, but in whatever undertaking they engaged at home they were still baffled and disappointed, and every thing went against them. The doing of any kind of business is frequently expressed in Hebrew by the phrase, "Going out," or "Coming in."—*G. Bush.* The hand of the Lord was against them—After they forsook God, whenever they took the sword in hand, they were as sure to be beaten as before they had been sure to conquer. Formerly their enemies could not stand before them, but whenever they went the hand of the Lord was for them; when they began to cool in their religion God suspended his favor, stopped the progress of their successors, and would not drive out their enemies any more, (verse 3,) only suffered them to keep their ground, but now, when they were quite revolted to idolatry, they were turned directly against them, and they *could not any longer stand before their enemies.*—*M. Henry.* As the Lord had said—God is faithful, and will keep both his warnings and his promises.

16. The Lord raised up—That is, by the secret prompting and inspiration of his spirit, working upon the hearts of particular individuals, in view of the sufferings and calamities of the people, and inciting them, like Moses in Egypt, to aim at effecting their deliverance. This inward impulse was usually, perhaps always, accompanied by an express call and command to undertake the work, and by some outward designation which testified to the people the divine election; such for the most part as the display of some signal act of heroism, the performance of some marvelous or miraculous exploit, as in the cases of Shamgar, Gideon, Samson, etc.—*G. Bush.* Judges which delivered them—From time to time deliverers were raised up, as occasion called, and the Spirit of the Lord came upon them; and again, on their death, the central bond was broken and the thread of the history is lost. The office, which gives its name to the period, well describes it. It was

occasional, irregular, uncertain, yet gradually tending to fixedness and perpetuity. Its title is itself expressive. The ruler was not regal, but he was more than the mere head of a tribe, or the mere judge of special cases.—*Dean Stanley*. The period of the Judges is the heroic age of Hebrew history. It abounds in wild adventure and desperate feats of individual valor. Personal activity, daring and craft, were the qualifications which raised the Judges to their title and eminence. They appear in their history as gallant insurgents or guerilla leaders, rather than as grave administrators of justice, or the regular authorities of a great kingdom. The name by which they are called, *Sopetim*, derived from a word signifying “to judge,” bears remarkable resemblance to the *Suffetes* of the Carthaginians. The office of the Hebrew Judge was rather that of the military dictator, raised on an emergency to the command of the national forces. What his judicial functions could have been seems very doubtful, as all ordinary cases would fall under the cognizance of the municipal judicatures.—*H. H. Milman*.

Observe, (1) In the days of the greatest degeneracy and distress of the Church, there shall be some whom God will either *find* or *make* fit to redress its grievances, and set things to rights. (2) God must be acknowledged in the seasonable rising up of useful men for public service. He endues men with wisdom and courage, gives them hearts to act and venture. All that are in any way the blessings of their country must be looked upon as the gifts of God. (3) Whom God calls he will own and give them his presence; whom he raises up he will be with. (4) The judges of a land are its saviours.—*M. Henry*.

Authorities to be Consulted.

Thornley Smith's Joshua and his Times, 277.
William Smith's Old Testament History, chap. xvii. Milman's History of the Jews, book vi. Ewald's History of Israel, vol. ii, pp. 264, 269, 311. Stanley's History of the Jewish Church, Lecture xiii. Bible Educator, ii, 18; iii, 200. Freeman's Bible Manners and Customs, No. 304. Kitto's History of the Bible, chap. xiii. See also the Lesson Compend, S. S. Journal, S. S. Times, National Teacher and other lesson helps on the lesson for April 11, 1875, 2d Quar. Lesson II. Foster's Cyclopaedia of Illustrations—ver. 14: 12311, 12232.

Practical Root Thoughts.

[LESSONS CONCERNING SIN.]

1. Sin is forgetfulness of God, and of human obligation to serve him. Ver. 10.
2. Sin is ingratitude toward God after all his mercies toward men. Ver. 10.
3. Sin is forsaking God, who alone is worthy of worship. Ver. 11, 12.
4. Sin is utter folly, in turning from the living God to senseless idols. Ver. 12.
5. Sin springs from love of the world and from association with sinners, which leads to the following of their example. Ver. 12.
6. Sin awakens the righteous anger of the Lord, who has a right to the service of men. Ver. 14.
7. Sin leads to suffering and trouble, from the world which induced it. Ver. 15.

B. C. 1249.]

LESSON IX.

[Aug. 26.

GIDEON'S ARMY.—Judg. 7. 1-8.

GOLDEN TEXT.—The sword of the Lord, and of Gideon.—JUDG. 7. 18.

TIME.—B. C. 1249.

PLACE.—The hill of Moreh, or Little Hermon.

CONNECTING LINKS.—(1) The Mesopotamian oppression—Othniel, the first judge, Judg. 3. 1-11. (2) The Moabite oppression—Ehud, the second judge. Judg. 3. 12-30. (3) Philistine oppression—Shamgar, the third judge. Judg. 3. 31. (4) Canaanite oppression—Deborah, the fourth judge. Judg. 4. 1-5. 31. (5) Midianite oppression—Gideon, the fifth judge. Judg. 6. 1-40.

INTRODUCTION.—At the end of forty years of peace new enemies appeared—the wild hordes of the desert, Midianites, Amalekites, and other nomadic tribes, swept over almost the whole land, pitched their tents, and fed their camels in the midst of the rich corn-fields of Israel. This was the most extensive and destructive servitude the nation had yet suffered. The people fled to mountain fastnesses, and hid themselves in caves. The land lay uncultivated, the cattle were destroyed, and a grievous famine ensued. The miserable Israelites called upon their God for succor, and Gideon, of the tribe of Manasseh, a man of highly noble person, and of a noble race, who was “as the son of a king, and whose brothers

were each one like the children of kings," received the divine commission as the deliverer of his country. An angel appeared to him while he was threshing corn by stealth in an underground winepress; preternatural signs convinced him of the celestial nature of his visitant. Gideon had offered, as a present to this superior being, a kid and a small portion of flour; he laid them on a rock. The angel touched them, and fire arose from the rock and consumed them. His first exploit, after having built an altar, and, according to divine command, offered sacrifice, was to overthrow at midnight the altar of Baal in the city of Ophrah. His father, Joash, was commanded by the indignant citizens to bring forth his son to be punished for this offense. *Will ye plead for Baal?* said the old man; *let Baal plead for himself!* And Gideon thence was called Jerubbaal—*let Baal plead*. The whole host of the invaders lay encamped on the plain of Jezreel. Gideon demanded a sign from heaven; it was granted. One night the dews, which fall so copiously in those regions, fell only on a fleece which he had spread; the next night the ground was steeped with moisture, the fleece remained dry. Gideon now prepared for a vigorous attack; 22,000 men, from Manasseh, Zebulun, Naphtali, and Asher, rallied at the sound of his trumpet; but the victory was to be achieved by a much smaller band. The army was first diminished to 10,000, all whose valor could not be relied on being allowed to return home. These were again reduced by a singular process, of which it is difficult to discover the meaning.—*H. H. Milman*. His own character is well indicated in the sign of the fleece—cool in the heat of all around, dry when all around were damped with fear. Throughout we see three great qualities—decision, caution, and magnanimity.—*Dean Stanley*.

1 Then ¹ Je-rub'ba-al, who *is* Gid'e-on, and all the people that *were* with him,

¹ Chap. 6. 32.—² Josh. 3. 1; 6. 12; Eccl. 9. 10.

1. **Jerubbaal, who is Gideon**—He was called *Jerubbaal*, as being the person against whom it was popularly said that Baal might strive, (chap. 6. 32.)—*Speaker's Commentary*. Nothing is more common in the Scriptures than for persons and places to be named from memorable events.—*G. Bush*. The name which the Abi-ezrites gave Gideon cleaved to him; but by this time it was transformed into a title of honor, since, in-

² rose up early, and pitched beside the well of ^a Ha'rod: so that the host of the

^a That is, Trembling.

probably in derision, has become honorable.—*F. Johnson*. Both the names of Gideon are significant. *Gideon* means he who *cuts down*, as destroying idolatry and routing God's enemies; *Jerubbaal*, he who challenges Baal to plead, and to show himself, if he can, as a god, (chap. 6. 31.)—*C. Wordsworth*. **Rose up early**—In order to march in the cool of the day. From what point they marched we do not know



Outline View of the Plain of Esdraelon and adjacent Mountains.

1. Jenin. 2. Taanach. 3. Megiddo. 4. Mount Gilboa. 5. Ain Jalud, (well of Harod.) 6. Jezreel. 7. Little Hermon, (Hill of Moreh.) 8. Shunem. 9. Nain. 10. Endor. 11. Mount Tabor. 12. Hill of Precipitation. 13. Nazareth. 14. El Fool. 15. Mount Hermon. 16. River Kishon. 17, 18. Where Elijah slew the prophets of Baal.

stead of being cursed, he was more and more successful. It marked him still as the friend of Jehovah and the enemy of Baal. Thus the name Christian, (Acts 11. 26,) conferred at first

but it was probably not far from the fountain of Harod, for they seem to have reached this the same day.—*F. Johnson*. **Beside**—Ought rather to be rendered "*above*." The situation below

Mid'i-an-ites were on the north side of them, by the hill of Mo'reh, in the ^s valley.

2 And the LORD said unto Gid'e-on, The people that *are* with thee *are* too many for me to give the Mid'i-an-ites into their hands, lest Is'ra-el ^avaunt

³ Gen. 12. 6.—⁴ Deut. 8. 17; 9. 4; 1 Sam. 17. 47; Psa. 23. 23, 24; Zech. 4. 6; 1 Cor. 1. 29; 4. 7;

would be too exposed for Gideon's small force; and it appears from verses 4 and 5 that the people came *down* to the water from the heights above.—*Speaker's Commentary.* The well of



Harod—That is, of trembling, evidently so called from the people who were *afraid*, (*hared*,) as mentioned in ver. 3. It is identified with great probability with *ain Jalud*, a

spacious pool at the foot of Gilboa, and the spot is thought to be the same as the site of Saul's last battle. See 1 Sam. 29. 1.—*Speaker's Commentary.* See map of Saul's last battle, with Lesson XII, Fourth Quarter. It is about a mile east of Jezreel, and hence it was also called the fountain of Jezreel. The water bursts out from a rude grotto in a wall of conglomerate rock, which here forms the base of Gilboa. It first flows into a large but shallow pond, and then winds away through the rich green vale past the ruins of Bethshean to the Jordan.—*S. S. Journal.* The host of the Midianites—The Midianites were a nomadic nation, so called from Midian, son of Abraham and Keturah. Gen. 25. 2. They were remarkable, not only for the vast number of their cattle, (Num. 31. 82-89; Judges 6. 5,) but also for their great wealth in gold and other metal ornaments, showing their connection with a gold country. At this time they were allies of the Amalekites, and of the Arabian tribes, called collectively "the children of the East." They seem to have extended their settlements to the east of Jordan, and to have belonged to the larger section of Arabs called Ishmaelites.—*Speaker's Commentary.* The hill of Moreh—Not Moreh near Sichem, (Gen. 12. 6,) twenty-five miles south of the present scene of action; but probably the little Hermon, the Jebel-el-Duhy of the Arabs, which incloses the plain two or three miles north of Gilboa, which shuts it in on the south.—*Speaker's Commentary.*

2. The Lord said unto Gideon—Gideon was accustomed by this time to receive divine

communications through the impressions of his soul, as did other holy men when they were inspired; and he had learned to distinguish these from impressions arising from other sources.—*P. Johnson.*

3 Now therefore go to, proclaim in the ears of the people, saying, Whosoever ^sis fearful and afraid, let him return and depart early

16, 17, 18; 44. 6, 7; Prov. 25. 6; Eccles. 9. 11; Isa. 10. 13; Jer. 9. 2 Cor. 4. 7; 10. 17.—⁸ Deut. 20. 8.

himself against me, saying, Mine own hand hath saved me. His design doubtless was, (1) To show that, as to any particular instruments, he could, in effecting his purposes, easily dispense with them, and that they were more indebted to him for employing them than he to them for tendering their services; (2) To shame and humble his people for their past cowardice in tamely submitting to the yoke of Midian.—*G. Bush.* Lest Israel vaunt themselves—Victory over Midian, and deliverance from their yoke would avail Israel nothing if they did not gain the firm conviction that God is their helper. The least chance of a natural explanation so excites the pride of man that he forgets God.—*P. Cassel.*

If the Israelites must have looked for victory from their fingers, they might have well said, The Midianites are too many for us; but that God, whose thoughts and words are unlike to men's, says, "They are too many for me to give the Midianites into their hands." If human strength were to be opposed, there should have needed an equality; but now God meant to give the victory, his care is not how to get it, but how not to lose or blemish the glory of it gotten.—*Bishop Hall.*

3. Proclaim in the ears of the people—

The appeal which Gideon is here directed to make was prescribed in the law (Deut. 20. 8) for every war in which the Israelites should be engaged, and its general object was to fortify the spirit of the army, by removing the cowardly and desponding. But in the case before us the intention of the Lord was to deprive his people of all ground of self-glorification.—*Keil.* Whosoever is fearful—The act of enlisting in the service was proper and commendable, but God saw that the *spirit* by which they were actuated was in multitudes of them defective, and therefore so ordered it that they should be put to the test, while at the same time he secured to his own great name the entire glory of the victory.—*G. Bush.* Mount Gilead—No mountain of this name is known in this locality, and it has been plausibly conjectured that the right reading

from mount Gil'e-ad. And there returned of the people twenty and two thousand; and there remained ten thousand.

4 And the LORD said unto Gid'e-on, The people are yet too many; bring them down unto the water, and I will try them for thee there: and it shall be, that of whom I say

3 Separate, or purify;

is *Gilboa*. Others think this may be the customary form of proclamation in Manasseh.—*Speaker's Commentary*. There returned . . . twenty and two thousand—The nearness and the overwhelming numbers of the enemy would render all who had not faith in God, and in Gideon as his agent, glad to escape from what they must have deemed certain defeat.—*F. Johnson*. Imagine the surprise, not of Gideon, indeed, but of his more faithful followers, when they see so many thousands of their comrades deserting the forlorn hope!—*E. Stock*.

It is a fine remark which Tacitus (*Annal.* xiv, 36, 3) puts into the mouth of Suetonius: Even with many legions, it is always the few who win the battle.—*P. Cassel*.

Christianity requires men. David's royal band of worthies was the type of the forces of the Church, all valiant men, and able to encounter with thousands. Doth but a foul word or a frown scare thee from Christ? Doth the loss of a little land or silver disquiet thee? Doth but the sight of the Midianites in the valley strike thee? Home, then, home to the world; thou art not for the conquering band of Christ. If thou canst not resolve to follow him through infamy, prisons, racks, gibbets, flames, depart to thine house, and save thy life to thy loss.—*Bishop Hall*.

This may help us to understand those providences which sometimes seem to weaken the Church and its interests—its friends are too many, too mighty, too wise, for God to work deliverance by; God is taking a course to lessen them, that he may be exalted in his own strength.—*Henry*.

4. The people are yet too many—Those only are wanted whose whole trust for victory is in God, because (1) their courage only can be relied on, and (2) they only, when the battle is won, will give God all the glory.—*E. Stock*. Bring them down to the water—The present command is to take the army to the water. The sign was not given till they arrived there. When we obey one divine direction God gives us another, thus giving us light according to our spirit of obedience, and guiding the obedient in all their doubts. Gideon was to walk

unto thee, This shall go with thee, the same shall go with thee; and of whomsoever I say unto thee, This shall not go with thee, the same shall not go.

5 So he brought down the people unto the water: and the LORD said unto Gid'e-on, Every one that lappeth of the water with his tongue, as a dog lappeth,

1 Sam. 16. 6, 7; Mal. 3. 2, 3.

by faith.—*F. Johnson*. Of whomsoever—God will not only choose his own plan, but the men who are to carry out his plan.

5. Every one that lappeth—The Hebrew word for lapping (*yalok*) is onomatopoeic, and sounds in its pronunciation like the noise of a dog when drinking.—*D. Steele*. Him shalt thou set by himself—Those who, when they reached a brook before the battle, did not allow themselves time to kneel down and satisfy their thirst in the most convenient manner, but simply took up some water with their hands as they stood in their military accouterments, to strengthen themselves for the battle and then proceeded without delay against the foe.—*Keil*. Those only are the true warriors of Jehovah, who, when an enjoyment is offered, as for instance, refreshments at a living well, taste it only in passing, and while standing on the alert; not seeking enjoyment, and crouching down to it in indolent comfort, but mindful every minute of the business in hand and the desired victory, only lapping the water like dogs upon their way.—*H. Ewald*. The Jewish interpretation, communicated by Raschi, is evidently far more profound. Gideon, it says, can ascertain the religious antecedents of his men from the way in which they prepare to drink. Idolaters were accustomed to pray kneeling before their idols. On this account kneeling, even as a mere bodily posture, had become unpopular and ominous in Israel, and was avoided as much as possible. Hence, he who, in order to drink, throws himself on his knees, shows thereby, in a perfectly free and natural manner, that this posture is nothing unusual to him, whereas those who have never been accustomed to kneel, feel no need of doing it now, and as naturally refrain from it. It would have been difficult for Gideon to have ascertained, in any other way, what had been the attitude of his men toward idolatry. While quenching their eager thirst, all deliberation being forgotten, they freely and unrestrainedly indicate to what posture they were habituated.—*P. Cassel*.

him shalt thou set by himself; likewise every one that boweth down upon his knees to drink.

6 And the number of them that lapped, *putting* their hand to their mouth, were three hundred men: but all the rest of the people bowed down upon their knees to drink water.

61 Sam.

Trifling things indicate the character and habits of a man. Coarseness cannot be concealed by broadcloth. Even in God's army are men who accidentally betray their spirit and tastes as those belonging to the enemy.—*S. S. Journal*.

This mode of drinking is often practiced in the East, and practice alone can give that peculiar tact which generally excites the wonder of travelers. The interchange of the hand between the water and the mouth is managed with amazing dexterity, and with nearly or quite as much rapidity as the tongue of the dog in the same act. The water is not *sucked* out of the hand, but by a peculiar jerk, is thrown into the mouth before the hand is brought close to it, so that the hand is approaching with a fresh supply almost before the preceding has been swallowed; which constitutes another resemblance to the action of the dog's tongue.—*G. Bush*.

6, 7. The number of them that lapped—Catching up a handful of water while passing. **Were three hundred men**—Enough to win the victory if God be among them, and all of the host who were fit men for their task. **The rest . . . bowed down**—Throwing aside their weapons, placing themselves off guard, and giving themselves up to the momentary enjoyment. **Let all the other people go**—Nine thousand seven hundred departed, leaving the three hundred fearless and faithful ones alone. Yet all the rest were of service in the pursuit of the fleeing Midianites. They could help to make the fruits of the victory available, though not to win it.

Who are they that form Christ's army? Some come not at all "to the help of the Lord against the mighty," like Issachar in the case before us, and like Reuben and others on a former occasion. Chap. 5. 16, 17, 23. Some come forward with enthusiasm, but draw back at the first sight of the work to be done, like the thirty-two thousand. Some remain in the army, they do not desert, but they show no burning zeal, no eager self-denial, and though they will share in the results of victory, it is not they whom Christ can place in the posts of honor and danger and responsibility. Some, however, are ready to take up their cross and follow their great Leader. Is their number limited? *Not by God*. Had all the ten thousand

7 And the LORD said unto Gid'e-on, "By the three hundred men that lapped will I save you, and deliver the Mid'i-an-ites into thine hand; and let all the other people go every man unto his place.

8 So the people took victuals in their hand, and their trumpets: and he sent

14. 6.

been like the three hundred, there would have been no need for reduction, for even though so many they would have given God the glory of the victory. No, we may *all* be among the three hundred if we will.—*E. Stock*.

8. So the people took victuals—This verse is rather obscure. A better sense is got by following the punctuation of the Septuagint and Chaldee versions: "*And they* (the three hundred) *took the victuals and trumpets of the people* (all of the people of verse 7) *into their hands*," that is, as Jerome expresses by adding *pro numero*, as many of them as they required, so that each of the three hundred should have a trumpet and a pitcher. This explains how the three hundred came to have each a trumpet and a pitcher and a lamp. Gideon took them from the whole army of nine thousand seven hundred men before he dismissed them.—*Speaker's Commentary*. It is not to be assumed that the three hundred men took all the provisions of the other thousands. The sense can only be that the three hundred took their provisions out of the supplies for the whole army. As the great body of the army was about to leave them, this little troop took from the common stores as much as they needed.—*P. Cassel*. **And their trumpets** [See illustration "Ancient Cornets," with Lesson III, ver. 5.]—The trumpets properly belonged only to the leaders of divisions, who used them to make signals. But as the great body was about to be disbanded, and the officers would not need the trumpets, Gideon, doubtless by a divine impulse, retained them. These trumpets had no keys for different notes, a much later invention; but several different notes were produced by varying the intensity of the blast, and signals could be varied also by varying the length and number of sounds.—*F. Johnson*. **Every man unto his tent**—To be dismissed, or to go to the tents, is the standing formula by which the cessation of the mobile condition of the army is indicated. The people are free from military duty, but they do not appear to have entirely disbanded.—*P. Cassel*. **He retained the three hundred**—With these he intended to give battle, and the conflict was

all *the rest of* Is-ra-el every man unto his tent, and retained those three hundred

near at hand, for the hostile army lay before him in the valley below at the foot of Little Hermon.—*P. Cassel.*

What are the weapons in this warfare? (1) The Gospel trumpet, the free proclamation of Christ's salvation every-where. (2) The torch of Divine truth, a light to lighten every man. (3) The earthen vessel, the human agency through which the truth is conveyed. "We have this treasure," says St. Paul, *in earthen vessels*, that the excellency of the power may be of God, and not of us." 2 Cor. 4. 7.—*E. Stock.*

Gideon's victory.—His attack was made at midnight. The three hundred men were divided into three companies, and they seem to have stretched in a line nearly or quite around the enemy's camp, the men placed at considerable distance one from another, (ver. 18,) as the object was not to fight but to terrify. The stratagem of Gideon, or rather of God, was simple. The torches were concealed in the large pitchers, or bread jars, until the men had taken their stations, so that their movement might not be detected. It was the duty of the leader of a band to blow the trumpet and give the war-cry. By him, in a night attack, stood a torch-bearer to light the way and guide the soldiers, so that they might always know where to find the leader; the torch at night was like the banner of day. Three hundred trumpets and torches represented three hundred companies of troops. The breaking of the jars, the outflashing of the lights, the deafening blare of trumpets on every side, aroused the enemy from sleep. The Israelites seemed, by the many lights and trumpets, to be present in overwhelming numbers. Each heathen in the darkness mistook his neighbor for a foe. They slew one another. The panic was universal. The invaders, incumbered with women and children and plunder of flocks and herds, as nomadic invaders are always cumbered, fled in confusion and scattered over the country, throughout which Gideon immediately

men. And the host of Mid'i-an was beneath him in the valley.

sent runners to arouse the people. The fords of the Jordan were seized by the Israelites, and the destruction of the invaders was complete.—*F. Johnson.*

Authorities to be Consulted.

Milman's History of the Jews, vol. i, p. 250. Smith's Old Testament History, p. 289. Ewald's History of Israel, vol. ii, pp. 357, 379. Stanley's History of the Jewish Church, Lecture xv. Bishop Hall's Contemplations, book ix, cont. 6. Kitto's History of the Bible, chap. xii. Geikie's Hours with the Bible, vol. ii. See also the helps on the lesson for April 25, 1875, 2d Quar., Lesson IV. Foster's Cyclopædia of Illustrations (Figures marked with a star refer to poetical volumes.)—*8467, *8468.

Practical Root Thoughts.

[THE SOLDIER OF THE LORD.]

1. The soldier of the Lord, as shown in Gideon, is he who accepts God's call, obeys God's command, and trusts God's promise. Chap. 6.
2. The soldier of the Lord is he who vaunts not his own deed, but gives to God all the glory. Ver. 2.
3. The soldier of the Lord is bold, even in the face of overwhelming foes. Ver. 8.
4. The soldier of the Lord is constant, when others forsake. Ver. 3.
5. The soldier of the Lord shows his loyalty and single-heartedness in small matters as well as great. Vers. 4, 5.
6. The soldier of the Lord seeks God's work rather than bodily care and pleasure. Ver. 6.
7. The soldier of the Lord is the instrument through whom God works his wonders and delivers his people. Vers. 7, 8.

B. C. 1120.]

LESSON X.

[Sept. 2.]

THE DEATH OF SAMSON.—Judges 16. 21-31.

GOLDEN TEXT.—The God of Israel is he that giveth strength and power unto his people.—PSA. 68. 38.

TIME.—B. C. 1120.

PLACE.—Gaza, on the sea-coast of Palestine.

CONNECTING LINKS.—(1) The victory and rule of Gideon, the fifth judge. Judges 7. 9-8. 35. (2) Abimelech, "the bramble king," the sixth judge. Judges 9. 1-57. (3) Tola and Jair, the seventh and eighth judges. Judges 10. 1-5. (4) Ammonite oppression—Jephthah, the ninth judge. Judges 10. 6-12. 7. (5) Ibzan, Elon, Abdon, the tenth, eleventh, and twelfth judges. Judges 12. 8-15. (6) Samson, "the strong man," the thirteenth judge. Judges 13-16. His birth. Judges 13. 1-25. His exploits. Judges 14. 1-16. His fall. Judges 16. 4-20.

INTRODUCTION.—The oppressions of the foreign powers which had hitherto overrun or subdued Palestine had been heavy and debasing while they lasted, but once repelled, the invaders retired within their own frontiers; the Philistines on the southern borders were more dangerous and implacable enemies to the peace of Israel. They had subdued apparently the whole allotment of Simeon; this tribe was annihilated, or scattered for refuge among the rest. Gaza and Askelon were in the power of the conquerors; and their frontier extended to that of Dan. At this juncture the most extraordinary of the Jewish heroes appeared; a man of prodigious bodily power, which he displayed not in any vigorous and consistent plan of defense against the enemy, but in the wildest feats of personal daring. It was his amusement to plunge headlong into peril, from which he extricated himself by his individual strength. Samson never appears at the head of an army, his campaigns are conducted in his own single person. As in those of the Grecian Hercules, and the Arabian Antar, a kind of comic vein runs through the early adventures of the stout-hearted warrior, in which love of women, of riddles, and of slaying Philistines out of mere wantonness, vie for the mastery. Yet his life began in marvel, and ended in the deepest tragedy.—*H. H. Milman. Samson's Fall.*—He formed his fatal connection with Delilah, a woman who lived in the valley of Sorek. She was bribed by the lords of the Philistines to entice Samson to tell her the secret of his strength; and though not at once betraying it, he played with the temptation. Thrice he suffered himself to be bound with green withes, with new ropes, and by weaving the seven locks of his hair to the beam of a loom; and each time, when Delilah gave the signal, "The Philistines are upon thee, Samson!" he burst the withes and ropes, and tore away the beam with its pin. Instead of resenting Delilah's evident treachery, he seems to have enjoyed the certainty of triumph over each new snare, till he was betrayed into the presumption that perhaps his strength might survive the loss of his Nazarite's locks. Wearied out with her importunity, he at last "told her all his heart," and, while he was asleep, she had him shaven of his seven locks of hair. For the last time he was awakened by her cry, "The Philistines are upon thee, Samson!" and thought he had only to go out and shake himself, as at the other times, for he wist not that Jehovah was departed from him.—*Wm. Smith. Samson's Character.*—It justifies the Divine administration in his case that his blended failure and success in fulfilling his mission corresponded with the blended traits of his character. For twenty years we may assume that his wildness grew grave, and he added to the character of a hero much of the last judge and wise ruler; but he scarce fulfilled the promise of the angel who announced his birth. An act of apostate debauchery, committed by this judge of Israel in the midst of his enemies, closed the honorable part of his career. Taken by his foes, no "Spirit of Jehovah" touched, as of old, the sinews of his strength, and he was abandoned to a just retribution. During those years that should have been laureled with honors, he was left to grind out wisdom in his dark penitentiary. In his final hour his heart returned to Jehovah, and his prayer was heard. In the united facts of his death and his finishing his mission with the destruction of the foes of Jehovah, we find proofs of the honesty of the historian and the blended goodness and severity of God.—*Dr. Whedon.*

21 But the Phi-lis'tines took him, and ^aput out his eyes, and brought him down to Ga'za, and

bound him with fetters of brass; and he did grind in the prison-house.

a Bored out; Prov.

12. 10; Psal. 74. 20.

21. The Philistines—A wealthy and powerful commercial people on the south-western border of Israel, on the shores of the Mediterranean. Their territory was assigned to Judah and Dan; but though conquered on the first invasion of Canaan, (Josh. 13. 2; Judges 1. 18,) they regained it and held it till the time of Da-



vid, who conquered it. They continued to annoy Israel, however, till the time of the Maccabees. The name Philistine means *emigrant*, from the emigration of this people early (Gen. 21. 32, 34) into Canaan. Gen. 10. 14. Our word

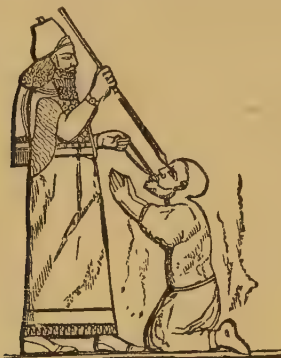
Palestine is derived from the word Philistine.—*F. Johnson.* Put out his eyes—The Hebrew verb means to bore, and indicates that they thrust his eyes out by very violent means. This they did as soon as they had secured him, and thus rendered his case apparently helpless and hopeless.—*D. Steele.* The monuments of Nineveh show us a king, who, with his lance, puts out the eyes of prisoners, as Nebuchadnezzar caused to be done to Zedekiah, the fallen king of Judah. There existed even different methods of this cruel art. Among the Persians, as Procopius informs us, it was usual either to pour hot oil into the eyes, or to dig them out with red-hot needles.—*P. Cassel.* His eyes were the first offenders, which betrayed him to lust; and now they are first pulled out, and he is led a blind captive to

22 Howbeit the hair of his head began to grow again ^bafter he was shaven.

23 Then the lords of the Phi-lis'tines gathered them together for to offer a

^b Or, as when he was shaven.

Gaza, where he was first captivated to his lust.
—*Bishop Hall.* To Gaza—Because it was the



Blinding a Prisoner, from an Assyrian Monument.

chief city of the nation, and far removed from the vicinity of Israelites who might seek to rescue him, and there was their great state prison.—*D. Steele.* Fetters of brass—In the Hebrew



Assyrian Fetters.

brasses, as we say irons, but in the dual number, implying their application to the two feet. 2 Sam. 8. 34.—*Speaker's Commentary.* In itself grinding was very suitable for prison



Women Grinding.

labor, being performed by hand-mills, the uppermost of which, called *the rider* by the

great sacrifice unto 'Da'gon their god, and to rejoice: for they said, Our god hath delivered Sam'son our enemy into our hand.

^c Signifies a fish.

Hebrews, was made to revolve upon the other by strength of hand. Being usually performed by females, the Philistines, studious of insult, regarded it as well suited to disgrace a man, and particularly such a man as Samson had been; while by providing stones of sufficient sizes and weight the work might be made laborious even for him.—*Kitto.*

22. The hair of his head began to grow—Clearly the growth coincided with the turning of the fallen champion's heart to God; and it is very likely that as, with a blind man's keen sense of touch, his fingers day by day traced the gradual growth of the symbolic locks, the memories of his youth revived, the vows of his consecration were renewed, and thus God actually used the natural lengthening of the hair as a means for restoring his wandering sheep.—*E. Stock.*

23. The lords of the Philistines—The Philistines occupied five cities and their surrounding villages on the sea-coast. At this time they had no king, but the five chiefs of their cities exercised joint sovereignty. In the second generation after this the king of Gath appears to have been the "over lord" of the Philistine cities. Gathered . . . together—This great festival scene had evidently been some time delayed, as appears from the fact of Samson's hair

having had time to grow in the interval; but perhaps the necessary preparations for so grand an occasion consumed considerable time, or it may have been the *second* anniversary of the deliverance of their enemy into their hands.—*G. Bush.* To offer a great sacrifice—This shows that Gaza was at that time the leading Philistine city, and that Dagon, the fish-shaped god, was regarded by them as the embodiment of the religious antithesis between them and Israel. Dagon, the sea-god, as it were, who protects the cities on the coast, over against the god of Israel, who has won the mainland.—*P. Cassel.* Dagon their god—Dagon was the national idol of the Philistines, (1 Chron. 10. 10,) so called from *dag*, a fish. The description of Dagon, in his temple at Ashdod, in 1 Sam. 5. 4, exactly agrees with the representations of a fish god on the Assyrian monuments. In these the figures vary, some having the human form down

24 And when the people saw him, they praised ¹their god: for they said, Our god hath delivered into our hands our enemy, and the destroyer of our country, ²which slew many of us.

25 And it came to pass, when their

hearts were ²merry, that they said, Call for Sam'son, that he may make us sport, And they called for Sam'son out of the prison house; and he made ²them sport: and they set him between the pillars.

¹ 1 Sam. 31. 9; 1 Chron. 10. 9; Psa. 97. 7; 115. 3, 8; 135. 15, 18; our slain.—² Chap. 9. 27.

Dan. 5. 4, 23; 1 Cor. 8. 4; 10. 19, 20.—^d And who multiplied—^e Before them.

to the waist, with that of a fish below the waist; others having a human head, arms, and legs, growing, as it were, out of a fish's body, and so arranged that the fish's head forms a kind of



Dagon.

miter to the man's head, while the body and fins form a kind of cloak, hanging down behind.—*Speaker's Commentary*. He was the representative or symbol of all those life-giving forces of nature which produce their effects through the medium of water. Kindred to Dagon were the Atargatis of the Syrians and the Babylonian Oannes or Odakon, who, according to Berosus, had the body of a fish, but the head, hands, feet, and voice of a man, and from the very beginnings of their history had taught the people arts, religion, law, and agriculture.—*D. Steele*.

24. **They praised their god**—They took the view that, since the strength of Samson had been the gift of the God of Israel, their triumph over him evinced that their own god, Dagon, was more powerful than Jehovah. This raised the matter from being a case between Samson and the Philistines, to one between Jehovah and Dagon, and it thus became necessary that the Divine honor should be vindicated.—

J. Kitto. **The destroyer of our country**—See the account of the devastation by the "fiery foxes." Chap. 15. 5. Doubtless many other acts of destruction, in a judgeship of twenty years, remain unrecorded. **Slew many of us**—At one exploit he had slain a thousand men, though the word may indicate only an utter defeat and scattering, and not slaughter.

Why do we learn zeal of idolaters? and if they be so forward in acknowledgment of their deliverances to a false deity, how cheerfully should we ascribe ours to the true! O God! whatsoever be the means, thou art the author of all our success.—*Bishop Hall*.

25. **When their hearts were merry**—The Philistine thanksgiving was like themselves. Men may be known by their feasts. Here there was no thought of humility. Seriousness also is wanting, although they remind themselves of their losses. The truth is, repentance, most attractive in prosperity, is unknown to the heathen. They praise their god, it is true, but they do not pray. They celebrate a popular festival, characterized by eating, drinking, and boasting.—*P. Cassel*. **Call for Samson . . . make us sport**—It was a common practice in heathen nations, on the return of their solemn religious festivals, to bring forth their war prisoners from their places of confinement or slavery, and, in heaping upon them every species of indignity, offer their grateful tribute to the gods by whose aid they have triumphed over their enemies.—*Jacobus*. He was probably known to be an accomplished dancer, his great agility and strength enabling him to excel in this art. The sexes never mingled in the ancient Eastern dance. The dance was considered a gymnastic exercise fit for the warrior, and it was sometimes used as an expression of religious emotion. 2 Sam.

26 And Sam'son said unto the lad that held him by the hand, Suffer me that I may feel the pillars whereupon the house standeth, that I may lean upon them.

27 Now the house was full of men and women; and all the lords of the Phi-lis'tines were there; and there were

upon the ³roof about three thousand men and women, that beheld while Sam'son made sport.

28 And Sam'son called unto the LORD, and said, O Lord God, 'remember me, I pray thee, and strengthen me, I pray thee, only this once, O God, that I may be at

³ Dent. 22. 8; Josh. 2. 6.

⁴ Jer. 15. 15.

6. 5-22. Arab men still preserve the ancient dances.—*F. Johnson*. Set him between the pillars—We have only to take the narrative in its plainest sense in order to avoid all difficulties. He was not made to dance between the two pillars, but to stand there, after the dancing was done, to receive the jests of the lordly feasters.—*F. Johnson*.

In 1863 we saw the two pillars in the Mosque El-Aksa, in Jerusalem, which are so close together that it is with difficulty a large man can get between them. July 21, 1864, one of the granite pillars supporting the dome of the Church of the Transfiguration, in St. Petersburg, broke, and the house fell on a great crowd of people.—*S. S. Journal*.

26. The lad that held him—Being blind, a boy was employed to lead him about by the hand, and place him where he was required to go.—*F. Johnson*. It may be plausibly conjectured that this was no Philistine. It seems not improbable that Samson, the judge, was followed into his prison by an attendant, whose fidelity continued unshaken. It enhanced the triumph of the Philistines to allow this. Upon this supposition, many points explain themselves. This attendant, then, may have furnished him with a description of the festive scene into the midst of which he was introduced, and informed him in what part of the building he was placed. From him he could also obtain guidance to the spot which he deemed it necessary to occupy. This attendant was in the secret of his prayer and purpose, and if we assume that he dismissed him before the catastrophe, we are at once enabled to explain how he could take up his peculiar position by the pillars without exciting attention. Thus the faithful follower escaped death, and quickly reported the event at home.—*P. Cassel*. Suffer me that I may feel the pillars—Let go of my hands that I may feel the pillars, and do not interfere to prevent my leaning upon them. Having been wearied with the dance, it seemed natural that he should rest by leaning against the pillars, and the Philistines suspected nothing. Perhaps Samson was willing to amuse them by

dancing in order that he might have an excuse for leaning on the pillars. His attitude of rest implied weakness, and thus prevented suspicion.—*F. Johnson*.

27. Full of men and women—The sexes were accustomed to mingle in the licentious rites of heathenism.—*F. Johnson*. Upon the roof about three thousand—We have no knowledge of the principles of the Phœnician architecture. It only appears from the narrative that there was a flat roof, from the top of which, as well as under it, spectators could see what was being done on the stage in front, and that this roof was mainly supported by two pillars, standing apparently in the center of the open front of the building, and so close to the stage without. The lords and principal persons seem to have sat within, under the roof, while the people, to the number of three thousand, stood on the flat roof.—*Speaker's Commentary*.

Now Samson is punished shall the Philistines escape? If the judgment of God begin at his own, what shall become of his enemies?—*Bishop Hall*.

28. Samson called unto the Lord—This shows that he had fully recovered himself, as soon as he can pray again. The prayer he now offers is full of fervor and intensity, rising heavenward like smoke from the altar of incense. It is the deep and vast complaint which, after the awful experiences of the last days, grief and hope have caused to gather in his soul. He used all the names of God with which he is acquainted, and confesses him, in the darkness which surrounds him, more deeply and fervently than formerly when enjoying the light of the sun.—*P. Cassel*. O Lord God—He says *Lord* at the beginning of his prayer, remembering that God is his Master. He says *Jehovah* when he prays to be remembered, because the name *Jehovah* expressed the faithfulness of God in remembering his people. He says *God* when he prays for strength; for the word in the original conveys the idea of power, the *Mighty*.—*F. Johnson*. Strengthen me, I pray thee—He no longer puts his trust in himself, nor yet in his growing

once avenged of the Phi-lis'tines for my two eyes.

29 And Sam'son took hold of the two middle pillars upon which the house stood, and 'on which it was borne up, of the one with his right hand, and of the other with his left.

30 And Sam'son said, Let me die

f Or, he leaned on them.

hair. The source of the consecration and strength which formerly adorned him, and for the return of which he pleads, is in God.—*P. Cassel*. That strength which he had lost by sin he recovers, like a true penitent, by prayer.—*M. Henry*. That I may be . . . avenged—These words do not, it is true, breathe the spirit of the Gospel, but they express a natural sentiment, proper to the age and knowledge and character of Samson.—*Speaker's Commentary*. For my two eyes—Literally, "for one of my two eyes." Samson may have felt that the utmost vengeance could not requite him for the loss of both his eyes, and with profoundest earnestness and emotion he prayed that the present destruction might be great enough to measurably answer for the loss of at least one of his eyes.—*D. Steele*.

29. Took hold of the two middle pillars—His blindness becomes a means of victory. He stands between the central pillars, on which the building rests, and between which the distance is not great. Being blind, it may be allowed him to take hold of them, in order to support himself by them.—*P. Cassel*.

30. Samson said, Let me die with the Philistines—To talk here of suicide is wholly unsuitable. He is too great for cowardly suicide, for it is a species of flight, and heroes do not flee. No; the blinded man perceives that the present moment holds out an occasion for victory, and avails himself of it, notwithstanding that it must cost him his own life. He knows that if his deed be successful, he cannot escape. But he is also ready to die. He is reconciled with his God; his eyes have again seen him who was his strength.—*P. Cassel*. Samson no more committed suicide than does a brave general when, with certain death before him, he rushes into the thickest battle, confident that his fall will save his country from a hated foe.—*D. Steele*. Fell upon the lords—They are mentioned first, because their death was of great political significance. The great numbers who perished would have had little effect upon the relations of the Philistines and

with the Phi-lis'tines. And he bowed himself with *all his* might; and the house fell upon the lords, and upon all the people that *were* therein: so the dead which he slew at his death were more than *they* which he slew in his life.

31 Then his brethren and all the house

g My soul.

the Israelites, if among them had not been the civil and military leaders of the former. Probably this destruction of the Philistine leaders paved the way for the great victory which Samuel gained over the foe a few years later, and of that decadence of the Philistine power which at once followed, and which culminated in the conquest of Philistia under David. So Samson "began to save Israel from the hand of the Philistines."—Chap. 13. 5.—*F. Johnson*. More than they which he slew in his life—All that he slew in his life, as far as we know, were the thirty men of Ashkelon, (chap. 14. 19,) the thousand at Lehi, (chap. 15. 15,) and the unnamed number of the great slaughter mentioned chap. 17. 8. He probably slew more than these, but all together would not amount to five or six thousand, the number that perished by the fall of this temple. If three thousand were on the roof, there were doubtless as many more below. *D. Steele*.

Behold how wronged power revenges itself. How dreadful is it for any man or nation to have in their midst some great social wrong. Let us see this and try to mend it, for a great wrong in a nation is a great rust, or rather let us say it is a sleeping giant, or a blind Samson, waiting its time—like a poor blind Samson in the land, and one, it may be, which, in rising to revenge itself, may also bring down destruction on itself; but that will best make the doom happier for those on whom the great tower and pillar falls. Every social injustice, every strength unacknowledged in a community, at last vindicates itself, and "breaks its chain on the head of its oppressors."—*E. P. Hood*.

31. His brethren . . . house of his father—The mention of "all the house of his father," in connection with his brethren, must mean the whole tribe of Dan, aiding his nearer relations. For brothers Samson had none probably. 13. 24. The Danites, taking advantage of the consternation of the Philistines, and the death of their lords and chief men, went down in force to Gaza, and recovered the body of their great captain and judge.—*Speaker's Commentary*. In antiquity the belief in supernatural interpo-

of his father came down, and took him, and brought him up, and ^bburied him between Zo'rah and Esh'ta-ol,

in the burying-place of Ma-no'ah his father: and he judged Is'ra-el twenty years.

^s Chap.

13. 25.

sitions had the force of a superstition, and any event like the catastrophe of the lesson was admitted at once to be of divine origin, and struck terror into all hearts. The Philistines would treat the body and the relatives of Samson with superstitious reverence, in order to propitiate such a mighty God as theirs was proved to be.

—*F. Johnson*. **Brought him up**—Gaza was near the coast, and the home of Samson and the possessions of Dan were on the higher land above.—*F. Johnson*. **Zorah**—A town in the low country, the birthplace of Samson. It still exists as *Surah*, thirteen miles west of Jerusalem, and twenty-three miles south-east of Joppa, and overlooking the valley of Sarek. **Esh-taol**, (*recess, or hollow way*), a town in the lowlands of Judah, (Josh. 15. 33;) given to Dan. Chap. 19. 41. It was the region of Samson's boyhood. Judges 13. 25. Robinson and others suggest *Yeshua* as its site; Black proposes *Eshu'a*, one mile east of Sara, (*Zorah*;) and Grove proposes *Kustul*, east of *Kuriet-el-Enba*.—*Schaff*. **The burying-place of Ma-noah**—It was probably a cavern, either natural or excavated, in the limestone hillside. All families of importance had such sepulchers. The body was wrapped in linen, with spices, and laid on a shelf hewed out in the side of the cavern.—*F. Johnson*. **Judged Israel twenty years**—It scarcely appears that Samson exercised any authority in the tribes; but, to carry on the historical time, he is counted as one of the judges.—*J. Kitto*.

Ancient expositors compare his death with that of Christ. But Samson gave up his life in order to cause his enemies to die; Christ in order to give them life. Samson died gladly because he had found his God again; in Christ God was never lost.—*P. Cassel*.

See! he comes with fettered tread;
Bursting heart and drooping head;
Flowing tresses, quickly grown;
O'er his shoulders wildly thrown;
Arms with superhuman power,
Nerved for that momentous hour.

Shouts of savage joy arise
While with fixed and wondering eyes
On this peerless man they gaze,
All absorbed in strange amaze.
But they know not God is there,
Hearing, owning, answering prayer.

One vast effort, and 'tis done,
Prayer is answered, victory won;
Samson wears the martyr's crown,
Dagon's temple tumbles down;
Priests and people, lords and all,
Buried in that mighty fall.

So in after ages died
Christ, for sinners crucified;
So the Prince of martyrs fell,
So he crushed the powers of hell;
So his people's peace obtained,
So the crown of glory gained.

—*J. S. Harvey*.

Authorities to be Consulted.

Smith's Old Testament History, chap. xix.
Ewald's History of Israel, vol. ii, p. 396. Stanley's History of the Jewish Church, Lecture xvi. Milman's History of the Jews, Book 6. Kitto's Bible History, chap. xiv. See Milton's poem of Samson Agonistes. Sunday Magazine, (Edinburgh,) 1869, p. 758, [article on Samson's Life, and the lessons that may be learned from it, by G. S. Drew.] See in the Normal Class for April and May, 1875, a series of articles by Rev. E. Paxton Hood on "Samson, the Strong Man." Geikie's Hours with the Bible, vol. iii. chap. i. See the Lesson Helps for May 2, 1875. [2d Quarter, Lesson V.] Foster's Cyclopaedia of Illustrations, (Poetical, vol. ii,) 3958-3964.

Practical Root Thoughts.

[THE LESSONS OF SAMSON'S LIFE.]

1. Samson's history warns against fleshly lusts which war against the Spirit.
2. It warns against a selfish use of divine endowments, bestowed for noble purposes.
3. It warns against frivolous aims in life, dissipating God-given powers.
4. It warns against evil companionships, which drag down to their own level.
5. It shows that the misuse of powers inevitably foreshadows the loss of them.
6. It shows that even after failure there may be a success by God's grace.
7. It shows that God hears prayer even from the erring.
8. It shows that a man should hold his own life of less value than the safety of God's cause.

B. C. 1322.]

LESSON XI.

[Sept. 9.

RUTH AND NAOMI.—Ruth 1. 14-22.

GOLDEN TEXT.—Thy people shall be my people, and thy God my God.—RUTH 1. 16.

TIME.—B. C. 1322.

PLACES.—The land of Moab, east of the Jordan, and Bethlehem in the tribe of Judah.

CONNECTING LINK.—This lesson belongs to the early period of the Judges, between the times of Joshua and of Gideon, perhaps during the rule of Shamgar, the third judge. See Connecting Links of Lesson IX.

INTRODUCTION.—*The Book of Ruth.*—Had we only drawn our impressions from the records of violence and crime contained in the Book of Judges, we should have been ready to conclude that all the gentler virtues had fled from the land while the children of Israel were alternately struggling for their lives and liberties with the tribes of Canaan, or yielding themselves to the seductions of Canaanite idolatry. But the Book of Ruth, lifting up the curtain which veiled the privacy of domestic life, discloses to us most beautiful views of piety, integrity, self-sacrificing affection, chastity, gentleness, and charity, growing up amidst the rude scenes of war, discord, and strife.—*Speaker's Commentary.* In Boaz and Ruth Israel and the Gentiles are, as it were, personified. In order to come under the wings of Israel, nothing is needed but the love and faith of Ruth. From these, and not from legal descent, according to the flesh, do the might and glory of the kingdom of God proceed. The Book, it is often said, with its contents, stands at the portal of the history of David; according to its spirit, it stands, like the Psalms, at the gates of the Gospel.—*P. Cassel.* A famine in the land drives an inhabitant of Bethlehem, with his wife and two sons, to the land of Moab, which, in consequence of the victories under Ehud, seems to have been at this time in some sort of subjection to the Israelites. The man's name was Elimelech, his wife's Naomi, and the sons were called Mahlon and Chilion. The woman lost her husband and two sons, in the land of Moab; but the childless wives of her sons, who had married in that land, remained with her. One was called Orpah, and the other Ruth. At the end of ten years, Naomi determined to return home, but, with beautiful disinterestedness, exhorted the widows of her two sons to remain in their own land with their well-provided friends, and not go to be partakers of her destitution. Orpah, accordingly, remained, but nothing could overcome the devoted attachment of Ruth to the mother of her lost husband.—*J. Kitto.*

14 And they lifted up their voice, and wept again: and Or'pah kissed her

4 Prov. 17.

14. They lifted up their voice—Naomi and her two daughters-in-law, Orpah and Ruth. **Orpah kissed**—The kiss at meeting and parting is the customary friendly and respectful salutation in the East.—*Speaker's Commentary.* Orpah's decision did not involve any going back at all. They were *still in Moab*, so that *not going on* was equivalent to remaining behind. Orpah might have stood still on the spot weeping, and looking wistfully after the retreating figures of her sister and mother-in-law, but that would have been just as plain a decision for Moab and against God.—*E. Stock.* **Her mother-in-law**—In Naomi we have a more commonplace specimen of a good woman, whose religion shows itself in fidelity to her earthly duties, which she fulfills with quiet pertinacity and female tact and contrivance, but not without constant dependence upon God, both in prosperity and adversity.—*Speaker's Commentary.* **Ruth clave**—Expressing her resolution in action, as Orpah had

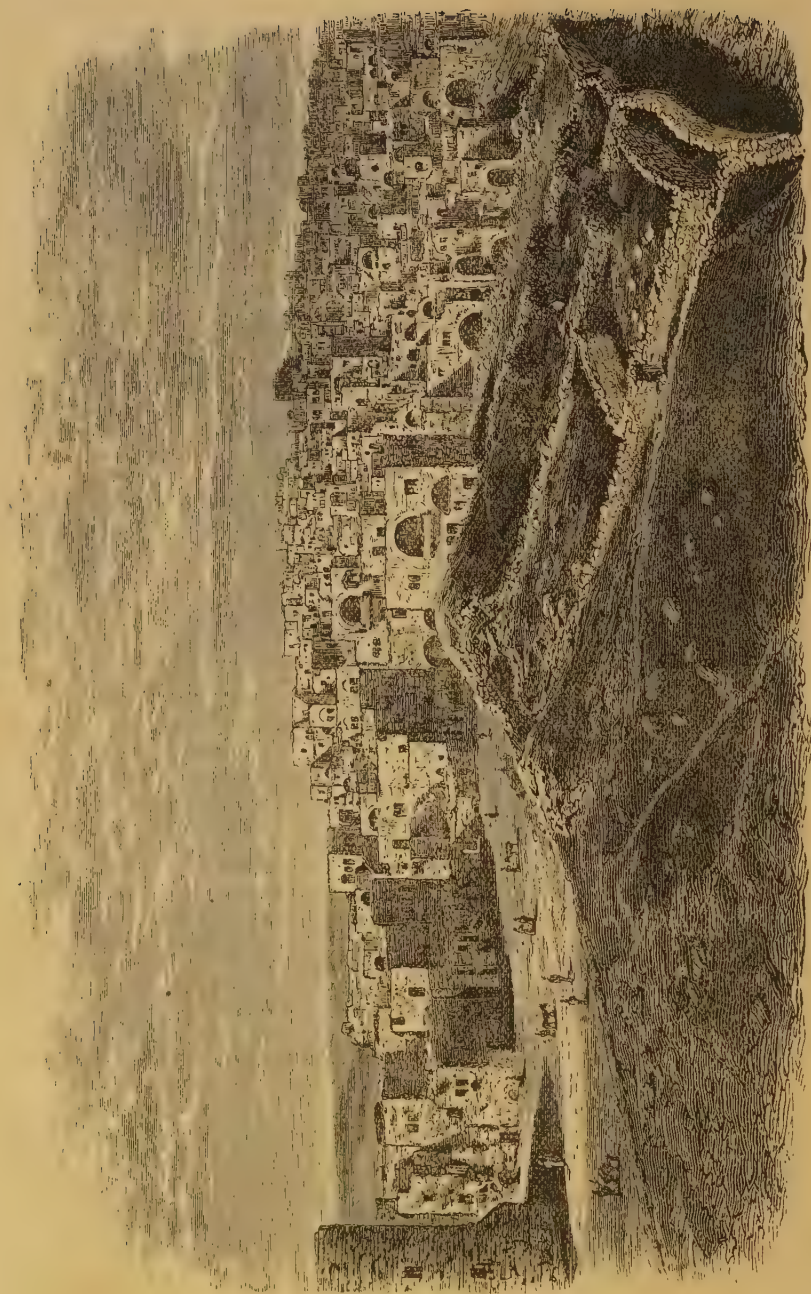
mother-in-law; but Ruth clave ¹ unto her.

17; 18. 24.

expressed hers. Ruth's resolve, and her action in throwing her arms around the neck of Naomi, were not merely from love, but also from regard for Jehovah, concerning whom she had been instructed by Naomi and her own husband.—*F. Johnson.* In Ruth we have a touching example of devoted affection to a husband's memory, of love and duty to an adopted parent, and of industry, modesty and patience grafted on to a resolute choice of the true God and his blessed service, in one who was by birth a heathen.—*Speaker's Commentary.*

These words contain two general parts, First, A blazing meteor falling down out of the air, etc. Secondly, A fixed star fairly shining in the heaven, etc.—*T. Fuller.*

Orpah's kiss showed she had an affection for Naomi, and was loth to part from her, yet she did not love her well enough to leave her country for her sake. Thus, many have a value and affection for Christ, and yet come short of salvation by him, because they cannot find in their



Bethlehem.

15 And she said, Behold, thy sister-in-law is gone back unto her people, and unto her ²gods: return thou after thy sister-in-law.

16 And Ruth said, ^aEntreat me not to leave thee, ^{or} to return from following after thee: for whither thou goest, I

² Josh. 24. 14, 19, 21; Judg. 11. 24.—^a Or, Be not against me:

hearts to forsake other things for him. They love him, and yet leave him, because they do not love him enough, but love other things better. Thus the young man that went away from Christ went away sorrowful. Matt. 19. 22.—*M. Henry.*

15. **Gone back unto her people**—The Moabites, descendants of Lot, living east of the Jordan and the Dead Sea. **Unto her gods**—In earlier times, the leading divinity of the Moabites was Chemosh, to whom the famous inscription of the "Moabite stone" is inscribed.—*An.* It is not that we belong to different nations, but that we worship different gods, that separates us here at the gates of Israel. Naomi could entertain no thoughts of missionary work as understood in modern times, and for that she is not to be reproached.—*P. Cassel.* **Return thou after**—Naomi must dissuade in order that Ruth might freely, under no pressure but that of her own love, accept Israel's God and people. Only after this is done, and she holds firmly to her decision, does Naomi consent and "cease to dissuade her."—*P. Cassel.*

16. **And Ruth said**—Here we have the resolution of Ruth portrayed in lively colors, so that if we consider her sex, a woman, her nation, a Moabite, one may boldly pronounce of her what our Saviour did of the centurion: "Verily I say unto you, I have not found so great faith, no, not in Israel.—*R. Bernard.* **Entreat me not**—Naomi and her house have made Israel also appear lovely in the eyes of Ruth. Who would not wish to go to a people whose sole known representatives were so amiable as Naomi and her family?—*P. Cassel.* **Whither thou goest**—Though to a country I never saw, and which I have been trained up in a low and ill opinion of; though far from my own country, yet with thee every road shall be pleasant.—*M. Henry.* **Where thou lodgest**—Though it be in a cottage, nay, though it be no better a lodging than Jacob had when he had the stones for his pillow, where thou settest up thy staff I will set up mine, be it where it will. **Thy people shall be my people**—When we take God for our God we must take his people for our people in all conditions; though they be a poor, de-

will go; and where thou lodgest, I will lodge: thy people *shall be* my people, and thy God my God:

17 Where thou diest, will I die, and there will I be buried: ^athe LORD do so to me, and more also, *if aught* but death part thee and me.

² Kings 2. 2.—^a 1 Sam. 3. 17; 25. 22; 2 Kings 6. 31.

spised people, yet, if they be his, they must be ours.—*M. Henry.* **Thy God my God**—Ruth is a prophecy, than which none could be more beautiful and engaging, of the entrance of the heathen world into the kingdom of God. She comes forth out of Moab, an idolatrous people, full of wantonness and sin, and is herself so tender and pure. In a land where dissolute sensuality formed one of the elements of idol worship, a woman appears, as wife and daughter, chaste as the rose of spring, and unsurpassed in these relations by any other character in Holy Writ. Without living in Israel, she is first elevated, then won, by the life of Israel, as displayed in a foreign land.—*P. Cassel.*

17. **There will I be buried**—Not desiring to have so much as her dead body carried back to the country of Moab, in token of any remaining kindness for it; but Naomi and she having joined souls, she desires they may mingle dust, in hopes of rising together, and being together forever in the other world.—*M. Henry.* **The LORD do so to me**—This is a form of imprecation frequent in the books of Samuel and Kings, by which the person swearing called down upon himself a severe punishment in case he should not keep his word or carry out his resolution. It may have been accompanied by some earnest gesture which expressed its meaning.

The Chaldee paraphrase thus relates the debate between Naomi and Ruth. Ruth said, "Entreat me not to leave thee, for I will be a proselyte." Naomi said, "We are commanded to keep sabbaths and good days, on which we may not travel above a thousand cubits," (a sabbath day's journey.) "Well," says Ruth, "whither thou goest, I will go." Naomi said, "We are commanded not to tarry all night with Gentiles." "Well," says Ruth, "where thou lodgest, I will lodge." Naomi said, "We are commanded to keep six hundred and thirteen precepts." "Well," says Ruth, "whatever thy people keep, I will keep, for they shall be my people." Naomi said, "We are forbidden to worship any strange god." "Well," says Ruth, "thy God shall be my God." Naomi said, "We have four sorts of deaths for malefactors—stoning, burning, strangling, and slaying with the sword." "Well," says Ruth, "where thou diest, I will die." "We have," said

18 When ^ashe saw that she ^bwas steadfastly minded to go with her, then she left speaking to her.

19 So they two went until they came to Beth'le-hem. And it came to pass, when they were come to Beth'le-hem,

^a Acts 21. 14.—^b Strengthened herself.—^c Matthew 21. 10. ^d That is, Bitter.

Naomi, "houses of sepulcher." "And there," said Ruth, "will I be buried."—*M. Henry.*

18. She was steadfastly minded—The effect of Naomi's repeated entreaties to Ruth to leave her was only to bring out more clearly Ruth's steadfast determination to cast in her lot with the people of the Lord. Compare the very similar entreaties of Elijah and the steadfast determination of Elisha not to leave him. 2 Kings 2. 2-6. In Elisha's case, as in Ruth's, the reward of steadfast persistence was very great. The case of the woman of Canaan (Matt. 15. 22-28) has also some analogy with them.—*Speaker's Commentary.* She left speaking—See the power of resolution, how it puts temptation to silence. Those that are unresolved, and go in religious ways without a steadfast mind, tempt the tempter, and stand like a door half open, which invites a thief; but resolution shuts and bolts the door, resists the devil, and forces him to flee.—*M. Henry.* The heart has reasons which the reason does not comprehend. This is seen in a thousand things. It is the heart that feels God, not the reason. Hence, that is the more perfect faith which feels God in the heart.—*Pascal.*

19. Until they came to Bethlehem—They descended to the Jordan valley, and probably

crossed it not far from the city of Jericho, where Naomi's ancestors had walked over its dry bed. They ascended to the mountains of Judah by one of the valleys, and then turned southward toward Bethlehem. Bethlehem was a small village, six miles south of Jerusalem, afterward the birthplace of David, and of his greater son, Jesus. It is still in existence, a prosperous place of three thousand inhabitants, more neat and cleanly than the average Palestinian city. [See on Lesson VII, Fourth Quarter.] All the city was moved—Bethlehem was a small town, (Micah 5. 2,) and in such small villages, and specially in an age when there were no newspapers, mails, etc.,



every event flew quickly abroad by the communications of friend to friend. Probably Naomi had been known widely and favorably in the place. The statement that the town was moved is introduced for its bearing on the future narrative. See chap. 2. 11, 12.—*F. Johnson.* They said—The women of the city said it, for the word is feminine. They with whom she had formerly been intimate were surprised to see her in this condition; she was so much broken and altered with her afflictions, that they could scarcely believe their own eyes, or think that this was the same person whom they had formerly seen, so fresh and fair and gay.—*M. Henry.* Is this Naomi—Moab ever leaves its mark. God heals the wounds of backsliding, but leaves the scars, that they may admonish us and others.—*Stems and Twigs.*

that ^aall the city was moved about them, and they said, *Is* ^bthis Na-o'mi?

20 And she said unto them, Call me not ^cNa-o'mi, call me ^dMa'ra; for the Almighty hath dealt very bitterly with me.

21 I went out full, ^eand the LORD

—^a Isaiah 23. 7; Lamentations 2. 15.—^c That is, Pleasant.—^d Job 1. 21.

20. Naomi . . . Mara—The meaning of Naomi is *pleasant, sweet*, to which she opposes what she calls a more appropriate name for her in her present circumstances. Call me *Mara*, that is, *bitter*. Exod. 15. 23.—*Speaker's Commentary.* Naomi manifestly intends, by these and the following words, to inform the inhabitants of Bethlehem of her fortunes. I am no longer the old Naomi, for what of happiness I possessed I have lost. I have no more any thing that is pleasant about me; my life, like a salty, bitter spring, is without flavor or relish.—*P. Cassel.* The Almighty hath dealt—The name Almighty is almost peculiar to the Pentateuch, and to the Book of Job, in which last it is found thirty times. It occurs twice in the Psalms, and four times in the Prophets.—*Speaker's Commentary.*

As long as the Church is called Naomi, there is no lack of adherents; but when she appears as Mara, and is signed with the cross of Christ, many go back.—*Starke.*

21. I went out . . . the Lord hath brought me home—She says, "I went away, and *Jehovah* has brought me home again." I went because it was my will to go, not God's; now God's judgment has sent me back. With that one word she gives vent to her sorrow that in those times of famine she forsook her people, although she herself was happy. What an evil

hath brought me home again empty: why then call ye me Na-o'mi, seeing the LORD hath testified against me, and the Almighty hath afflicted me?

22 So Na-o'mi returned, and Ruth the

Mo'ab-it-ess, her daughter-in-law, with her, which returned out of the country of Mo'ab: and they came to Beth'lehem in ⁸the beginning of barley harvest.

⁸ Exod. 9, 31;

2 Sam. 21. 9.

thing it is to follow one's own will when that will is not directed by the commandments of God! Man goes, but God brings home.—*P. Cassel.* **Full . . . empty**—Full of family happiness, of joy in her sons, and of hope of a cheerful old age, surrounded by children and children's children; but empty now of all these, without possessions and without hope. A penitent feeling pervades her lamentation.—*P. Cassel.* **The Lord hath testified**—The phrase here used is a very common one, as applied to a man who gives witness concerning (usually against) another in a court of justice. Exod. 20. 16; 2 Sam. 1. 16; Isa. 3. 9; 59. 12, etc. Such a one would doubtless be looked upon as an enemy. Naomi, in the bitterness of her spirit, complains that the Lord himself was turned against her, and was bringing her sins up for judgment.—*Speaker's Commentary.* **The Almighty hath afflicted**—Especially to consider that he who afflicts us is *Shaddai*, the *Almighty*, with whom it is folly to contend, and to whom it is our duty and interest to submit. It is that name of God by which he enters into covenant with his people—I am God Almighty, God All-sufficient. Gen. 17. 1. He afflicts as a God in covenant, and his all-sufficiency may be our support and supply under all our afflictions. He that empties us of the creature knows how to fill us with himself.—*M. Henry.*

22. **So Naomi returned**—The curiosity of the inhabitants of Bethlehem is satisfied; they have heard the history of Ruth; but with this their sympathy has likewise come to an end.—*P. Cassel.* **Ruth the Moabitess**—This was the description by which Ruth was commonly designated by the people of Bethlehem, as appears from chap. 2. 6, where the identical phrase, *The Moabitess who returned with Naomi from the country (field) of Moab* recurs. The constant recollection on the part of the simple villagers that Ruth was a foreigner, the admiration which her fidelity to her husband's relations had conciliated, and the interest in the sorrows of Naomi, which never died among the primitive people of Bethlehem, are vividly depicted in this phrase which we have, as it were, yet warm from the lips of Ruth's contemporaries.—*Speaker's Commentary.* Ruth, the Moabitess, was undoubtedly one of the first

fruits of the ingathering of Gentiles into the Church of Christ, and so an evidence of God's gracious purpose in Christ, "Also to the Gentiles to grant repentance unto life;" and the important evangelical lesson is as plainly taught in her case as in that of Cornelius, "that God is no respecter of persons, but in every nation he that feareth God, and worketh righteousness, is accepted of him." The great doctrine of divine grace is also forcibly taught by the admission of Ruth, the Moabitess, among the ancestry of our Lord Jesus Christ.—*Speaker's Commentary.* **In the beginning of barley harvest**—This is mentioned to explain the narrative in the next chapter.—*Speaker's Commentary.* The glimpses of ancient life in the future town of David and of Christ are full of interest. Then, as now, its single street ran along the double crest of the white chalk ridge 2,500 feet above the sea; its slopes terraced into hanging gardens, with rows of olives and vines; a pleasant valley lying underneath on three sides, musical with the sound of brooks, though its eastern end is almost touched by the terrible wilderness of Judah. This sunny breadth, when Ruth's story opens, is yellow with ripe barley, and rich with tall green wheat that will be golden ere long. The harvest is reaped by men, but the sheaves are bound by maidens. Life is still simple, and the well-to-do Boaz courteously greets his work-people as he comes to them, and is as politely greeted in return.—*C. Geikie.*

Elm-elech (which signifies God the King) being dead, Naomi (my delight, my pleasure) becomes a widow, and eventually loses her children also. She typifies the Jewish nation, who, having lost her God, is like a widow, and has no heir. Yet there shall be a remnant, destitute of all right to the promises, (and, therefore, prefigured historically by a stranger,) who will be received in grace, similarly to the Gentiles and the Church, who will faithfully and heartily identify itself with desolate Israel.—*Darby.*

The plume-like waving of the auburn corn,
By soft winds to a dreamy motion fanned,
Still brings me back thine image, O forlorn
Yet not forsaken Ruth! I see thee stand
Lone 'midst the gladness of the harvest band,
Lone as a wood-bird on the ocean's foam
Fallen in its weariness. Thy fatherland
Smiles far away, yet to thy sense of home,



A Valley near Bethlehem.

That finest, purest, which can recognize
 Home in affection's glance, forever true,
 Beats thy calm heart; and if thy gentle eyes
 Gleam tremulous through tears, 'tis not to rue
 Those words immortal in their deep love's tone,
 "Thy people and thy God shall be mine own."
 —*Scotch Sunday-school Magazine.*

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Practical Root Thoughts.

[RUTH'S NOBLE CHOICE.]

It was the choice of one who had not enjoyed the privilege of God's people.

2. It was a choice while yet in Moab for Israel, of God's people while yet in the world.

3. It was an independent choice, not influenced by example, but in the face of it. Ver. 14.

4. It was an intelligent choice, in full view of the discouragements and difficulties in the way. Ver. 15.

5. It was an affectionate choice, influenced by love for one who had shown forth the character of God's people. Ver. 16.

6. It was a determined choice, in the face of discouragements. Ver. 16.

7. It was an unselfish choice, not influenced by worldly considerations. Vers. 18-21.

8. It was a choice leading to blessed results, both for time and eternity.

B. C. 1171.]

LESSON XII.

[Sept. 16.

A PRAYING MOTHER.—1 Sam. 1. 21-28.

GOLDEN TEXT.—I have lent him to the Lord; as long as he liveth he shall be lent to the Lord.—1 SAM. 1. 28.

TIME.—B. C. 1171.

PLACES.—The birthplace of Samuel, Ramah. The tabernacle at Shiloh.

CONNECTING LINKS.—(With Lesson X.) Eli, usually reckoned as the fourteenth Judge, but perhaps more correctly the thirteenth, ruling over Central Palestine while Samson was Judge of Southern Palestine.

INTRODUCTION.—*The Books of Samuel.* The First and Second Books of Samuel are called also the First and Second Books of Kings. They bear Samuel's name, perhaps because he wrote the history of his own times as given in the First Book, and, therefore, the entire work went under his name. But it is more probable that the name was in consequence of Samuel being the hero of the first part of the history, and that the author belonged to a later period. The Hebrew is singularly clear and pure from Aramaisms. The two books are thus analyzed in Lange's Commentary. First part: Samuel's life and work as judge and prophet. 1 Sam. 1. 1-7. Second part: Saul, chaps. 8-31, (1) Founding of kingdom, his appointment, chaps. 8-15. (2) His fall, chaps. 16-31. Third part: David, 2 Sam., (1) David king over Judah only, 2 Sam. 1-5. 5. (2) David king over all Israel, chaps. 5. 6-24. These books formed only one in the Hebrew canon. They are the antecedents to the books of the Kings, but are not from the same hand. "In Kings are many express references to the Law; in Samuel none. In Kings the Exile is often alluded to, it is not so in Samuel. The plans of the two works vary; Samuel has more of a biographical cast; Kings more the character of annals."—*Schaff.* While Eli, the high-priest, was judging Israel, and at the time when Samson was beginning to fight against the Philistines, a pious Israelitish woman prayed to the Lord for a son. Vers. 1-18. Her prayer was heard. She bore a son, to whom she gave the name of Samuel, because he had been asked for from the Lord. As soon as he was weaned, she dedicated him to the Lord for a lifelong service, (vers. 19-28,) and praised the Lord in a song of prophetic character for the favor which he had shown to his people through hearkening to her prayer. Chap. 2. 1-10.—*Keil and Delitzsch.*

21 And the man El'ka-nah, and all his house, went up to offer unto

the LORD the yearly sacrifice, and his vow.

21. The man Elkanah—His descent is uncertain. He is called an Ephrathite, or, according to another reading, an Ephraimite, but it seems certain, from the evidence of the genealogies, that he was a descendant of Korah, the Levite, of the family of the Kohathites. The two statements are easily reconciled by assuming that his family were settled in Mount Ephraim. The place of their abode was *Ramathaim-Zophim*, (the double heights of the beacon or watch,) elsewhere called *Ramah*, and identified by tradition with the lofty hill of *Nebi Samuil*, (the prophet Samuel,) four miles north-west of Jerusalem. It is now crowned by a mosque (itself the successor of a Christian church) where Samuel's sepulcher is still revered alike by Jews, Moslems, and Christians. But the site is very uncertain. It was Samuel's usual residence to the end of his life.—*W. Smith.* **And all his house**—His two wives, children, and servants. We should be diligent in our attendance in God's house, and parents should always bring their children to it.—*F. Johnson.* **Went up to offer**—The

tabernacle and the ark were at Shiloh in the territory of Ephraim, from its fortunate central position the most powerful, as the least exposed to foreign invasion, of all the provinces.—*H. H. Milman.* **The yearly sacrifice**—In like manner David spake of a "yearly



sacrifice" for all his family at Bethlehem, (1 Sam. 20. 6,) and Deut. 12. 11-14 points to a joyful feasting of the whole family before the Lord, different from the three great festivals at which only the males were enjoined to be present. It is likely that during the unsettled times of the Judges the attendance of the Israelites at the three festivals fell into desuetude or great irregularity, and this one feast which may have coincided with the feast of Pentecost or Tabernacles, may have been substituted for them.—*Speaker's Commentary.* **And his vow**—It fol-

22 But Han'nah went not up; for she said unto her husband, *I will not go up until the child be weaned, and then I will* ¹bring him, that he may appear before the LORD, and there ²abide for ever.

23 And ³El'ka-nah her husband said

¹ Luke 2. 22.—² Chap. 2. 11; 3. 1.—³ Num. 30. 7.

lows from the expression "and his vow," that Elkanah had also vowed a vow to the Lord, in case the beloved Hannah should have a son. The vow referred to the presentation of a sacrifice.—*Keil*.

22. But Hannah—It is on one individual of the house that our attention is specially fixed, the best-beloved but childless wife, who bears the Phenician name which now first appears, "Hannah," or "Anna," afterward thrice consecrated in the sacred story. She was herself almost a prophetess and a Nazarite. She is the first instance of silent prayer. Her song of thanksgiving is the first hymn, properly so called, the direct model of the first Christian hymn of "the Magnificat," the first outpouring of individual as distinct from national devotion, the first indication of the coming greatness of the anointed king, whether in the divine or human sense.—*Dean Stanley*. Went not up—Very young children were taken upon longer journeys, and the reason was not fear for the boy's health; she seems to have determined that she would not appear before Jehovah until she could bring to him for his permanent possession that which she vowed.—*F. Johnson*. Until the child be weaned—Hebrew mothers, as elsewhere in the East, usually suckled their children till the age of two years complete, sometimes till the age of three. The Persians suckle boys two years and two months, and girls two years.—*Morier*, quoted by *Kalisch*. That he may appear before the Lord—The Levites generally were only required to perform service at the sanctuary from their twenty-fifth to their fiftieth year, (Num. 8. 24, 25;) but Samuel was to be presented to the Lord immediately after his weaning had taken place, and to remain at the sanctuary forever, that is, to belong entirely to the Lord. To this end he was to receive his training at the sanctuary, that at the very earliest waking up of his spiritual susceptibilities he might receive the impressions of the sacred presence of God.—*Keil*.

Hannah is regarded by the ancient expositors as a type of the Christian Church, for a long time barren, and mocked by her rival, the Jewish synagogue, but at last breaking forth into singing,
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unto her, Do what seemeth thee good; tarry until thou have weaned him; ⁴only the LORD establish his word. So the woman abode, and gave her son suck until she weaned him.

24 And when she had weaned him, she took ⁵him up with her, with three

⁴ 2 Sam. 7. 25.—⁵ Deut. 12. 5.

with a rapturous ecstasy of thankfulness to God.—*C. Wordsworth*.

23. Do what seemeth thee good—Elkanah exhibited such an absolute trust in the judgment of Hannah as it should be the aim of every wife to inspire in the mind of her husband.—*F. Johnston*. The Lord establish his word—What word Elkanah here refers to is not clear. Some, taking *word* in the sense of *matter or thing*, a meaning which it sometimes has, paraphrase the sentence thus: The Lord carry out and perfect what he has begun in the case of this child. Others suppose that reference is made to some special revelation concerning the mission and destiny of Samuel, which the sacred writers have not recorded. But it is better to understand by *his word* the benediction of Eli, (verse 17,) "The God of Israel grant thee thy petition." According to this view, the parents of Samuel regarded the high-priest's prayer as a prophecy, the word of God respecting Hannah's prayer for a child, and her vow to consecrate such child to the divine service.—*D. Steele*. The woman . . . gave her child suck—The close attendance Hannah gave to the nursing of him was not only because he was dear to her, but because he was devoted to God, and for him she nursed him. She therefore nursed him herself, and did not hang him on another's breast. We ought to take care of our children, not only with an eye to the law of nature as they are ours, but with an eye to the covenant of grace as they are given up to God. This sanctifies the nursing of them, when it is done as unto the Lord.—*M. Henry*.

If the wife be a vine, the husband should be an elm to uphold her in all worthy enterprises, else she falls to the ground, and proves fruitless.—*Bishop Hall*.

24. She took him up—From Ramah to Shiloh. With three bullocks—A bullock, perhaps, for each year of the child's life. Or, one for a burnt-offering, another for a sin-offering, and the third for a peace-offering. So far was she from thinking that, by presenting her son to God, she made God her debtor, that she

bullocks, and one ephah of flour, and a bottle of wine, and brought him unto the house of the LORD in Shiloh: and the child *was* young.

thought it requisite by these slain offerings to seek God's acceptance of her living sacrifice. All our covenants with God for ourselves and ours must be made by sacrifice, the great sacrifice.—*M. Henry*. **Ephah**—A measure containing, according to Josephus, a little over eight gallons, but, according to the rabbinites, a little over four gallons.—*F. Johnson*. **Flour**—For an oblation. It was the product of the hand-mill turned by women or servants. It was to be of the finest kind.—*F. Johnson*. **Bottle of wine**—A *skin* of wine. The Arabs keep water, milk, liquors, etc., in bottles made of goat-skins which are drawn from the animal with the bodies uncut. The cut parts, at the head, feet, tail, etc., are then sewed or tied up, making a tight bag or bottle. Greeks, Romans, and Egyptians all used such vessels, which are men-



Wine Skins.

tioned by Homer, Athenæus, and Virgil. Similar vessels are now used in Spain, and are called *barrachas*.—*S. S. Journal*. The burnt-offering represented the surrender of the person to God through the merits of Christ. The oblation of flour represented the dedication of the property, and the drink-offering represented the hearty joy with which the person and property were thus offered. The offering of the person was by a bloody sacrifice, because the person is sinful, and can only be made worthy of God's use through the sacrifice of Christ; but the dedication of the property was represented by an unbloody offering of flour, because our property has not sinned and needs no atonement. These offerings of Elkanah and Hannah were peculiarly appropriate to an occasion when they were yielding to God that which was dearer than life and property—an only son.—*F. Johnson*.

24. Unto the house of the Lord—The tabernacle, which, from various indications, would appear to have become a more permanent and house-like structure than in the earlier days.

25 And they slew a bullock, and brought the child to E'li.

26 And she said, Oh my lord, as thy soul liveth, my lord, I *am* the woman

At Shiloh—A place seventeen miles north of Jerusalem, and very nearly midway between Bethel and Shechem. It was fixed upon by Joshua as the place of the ark, and remained the religious capital of the nation until the close of Eli's judgeship, when it fell into neglect from the loss of the ark, and perhaps was laid waste by the Philistines. It remained desolate ever after during Israelite history. It is now called *Seilan*. **The child was young**—I see no inconvenience in admitting such an extraordinary child as this into the tabernacle, at three years old, to be educated among the children of the priests.—*M. Henry*.

25. They slew a bullock—The Hebrew is *the bullock*, that is, the particular one with which the consecration of the child was associated. This mention of one by no means implies that there was only one, or that only one of the three was offered.—*D. Steele*. **Brought the child**—Precious are all these gifts, but ineffably most so that of her beautiful boy. One of the bullocks must bleed, and so, too, in a different manner, her little lamb must be offered upon the altar of God.—*Gilfillan*. **To Eli**—The fact that Eli was a descendant of Ithamar, the younger son of Aaron, (as is shown by 1 Chron. 24, 3, Ahimelech being a descendant of Eli,) and not of the priestly line of Eleazar, is not explained in the history. We would suggest the probability that the last pontiff of Eleazar's line died, leaving no son old enough to take the office, and that it then (as afterward in the succession in the kingdom) devolved on his adult uncle or cousin of the line of Ithamar.—*J. Kitto*. In this gloomy time the name of Eli emerges as both the high-priest at Shiloh and the Judge of Israel, but he comes before us in his feeble old age, with a soft and yielding goodness ill-suited for the times. Only gentle words come from his lips, and he is unable even to rebuke his unworthy sons with the sternness their offenses demanded. But such a spirit must, in those rough times, have had its special worth in the influence of a blameless life, and in commending widely the religion it exemplified. Hence, we may justly regard him as no unworthy agent in the religious revival which culminated under Samuel, and raised Israel from its political degradation. Despairing hearts from Ephraim or Dan, or from beyond the Jordan, must have constantly sought the high-

that stood by thee here, praying unto the LORD.

27 For ^athis child I prayed; and the LORD hath given me my petition which I asked of him:

^a Matt. 7. 7.—^pOr, returned him, whom I have obtained by petition, to the LORD.

priest at Shiloh, nor can it be doubted that they would be pointed by him to Jehovah, the God of their fathers, as the true help of the nation in its troubles, and made to feel that their having forsaken him had brought them all their sorrow.—*C. Geikie.*

26, 27. As thy soul liveth—A form of oath peculiar to the books of Samuel. The age of the Judges was noticeably an age of vows. **I am the woman—**Eli had, perhaps, forgotten her, but she had kept his words in her heart. So, often, the minister of God may utter his benediction, which, though forgotten by himself, lives in another memory, and causes untold comfort.—*D. Steele.* **That stood by thee here—**Somewhat emphatic, *on this spot.* Eli was sitting on his throne, as, before, when they brought the child to him, (verse 25,) and the spot where she was now standing was the very same on which she had offered up her prayer to God. Verses 10-12.—*Speaker's Commentary.* **For this child I prayed—**If Hannah had repented of her vow, and not presented her son to the tabernacle, Eli could not have challenged him; he had only seen her lips stir, not hearing the promise of her heart. It was enough that her own soul knew her vow, and God, which was greater than it. The obligation of a secret vow is no less than if it had ten thousand witnesses.—*Bishop Hall.*

28. I have lent him to the Lord—The meaning "lent," and "borrowed," still ascribed by some authorities to the words here translated, are very feebly warranted. Keeping to the usual signification "to ask," "ask for," "request," the thought of Hannah seems to be: I have, as though requested, yielded the boy to Jehovah, and he shall henceforth belong to Jehovah, as one whom he has requested, or as one whom I obtained from him by request, and whom, therefore, I hold as his.—*G. R. Bliss.* We would translate this verse, *And I also cause him to ask of Jehovah all the days which he shall live; he is the asked of Jehovah.* To cause him to ask of Jehovah is the same as causing him to be in constant intercourse and favor with him, and this was to be Samuel's lot and destiny.—*D. Steele.* **He shall be lent to the Lord—**Though it was an earthly blessing Hannah asked for, yet she

28 Therefore also I have ^alent him to the LORD; as long as he liveth ^bhe shall be lent to the LORD. And he ^cworshipped the LORD there.

^b Or, he whom I have obtained by petition shall be returned.—
^c Gen. 24. 26, 52.

vowed to give it back to God. Her son should not be a rich farmer, like Boaz, or a great warrior, like Joshua, but be consecrated to God's service in his temple. And to this end she had to part with the child at a tender age. Here was a great sacrifice. When we ask God for temporal mercies, have we the like resolve about them?—*E. Stock.* **He worshipped the Lord there—***He bowed down.* Who bowed down? The answer is difficult. But most probably the boy is intended. His piety was already fervent. He had been instructed concerning the duty of worship, and in reference to his own destiny as a special servant of Jehovah; and he ratified the words by which his mother gave him away by prostrating himself in adoration, as he had been taught. Children in the East are matured in mind and body much earlier than children in our more severe climates.—*F. Johnson.*

Whatever we give to God may, upon this account, be said to be *lent* to him; that though we may not recall it as a thing lent, yet he will certainly repay it with interest, to our unspeakable advantage, particularly what is given to *his poor.* Prov. 19. 17.—*M. Henry.*

See in Samuel: (1) The child of God weaned from the strongest earthly love—a mother; (2) The child of God brought to God. Verse 28; (3) The child of God given to God; (4) The child of God abiding forever before God. Verses 22, 28.—*S. S. Journal.*

The rose was rich in bloom on Sharon's plain,
When a young mother, with her first-born, thence
Went up to Zion; for the boy was vowed
Unto the temple-service. By the hand
She led him; and her silent soul the while,
Oft as the dewy laughter of his eye
Met her sweet serious glance, rejoiced to think
That aught so pure, so beautiful, was hers
To bring before her God.

* * * * *
I give thee to thy God—the God that gave thee,
A well-spring of deep gladness to my heart!

And, precious as thou art,
And pure as dew of Hermon, he shall have thee,
My own, my beautiful, my undefiled!
And thou shalt be his child.

Therefore, farewell! I go; my soul may fall me,
As the stag panteth for the water brooks,
Yearning for thy sweet looks!

But thou, my firstborn! droop not, nor bewail me;
Thou in the shadow of the Rock shalt dwell,
The Rock of strength. Farewell!
—Mrs. F. D. Hemans.

Authorities to be Consulted.

Kitto's History of the Bible, chap. xv. Stanley's Jewish Church, Lecture xvii. Milman's History of the Jews, book vi. Ewald's History of Israel, ii, 409, 419. Smith's Old Testament History, chap. xix. Bible Educator, ii, 226. See also helps on the lesson for May 16, 1875, (2d Quarter, Lesson VII.) Freeman's Bible Manners and Customs, Nos. 11, 741. See a poem by Mrs. Hemans on "Hannah Parting with Samuel." Kitto's Daily Bible Illustrations, 28th week. Geikie's Hours with the Bible, vol. ii, chap. i, 2. Foster's Cyclopedia of Illustrations, *1399, 5950, 4542, *8976, *3489,

4156, 9857, 10653. [Figures marked with a star refer to poetical volumes.]

Practical Root Thoughts.

[A GODLY HOUSEHOLD.]

1. The godly household is one where the head recognizes the Lord. Ver. 21.
2. It is where the family are united in God's service. Ver. 21.
3. It is where children are recognized as God's gift, and consecrated to his service. Ver. 22.
4. It is where there is unity and confidence between husband and wife. Ver. 23.
5. It is where God's claim to worship and giving is recognized by sacrifice. Ver. 24.
6. It is where benefits are recognized as in answer to prayer. Vers. 26, 27.
7. It is where children are taught by example and precept to worship God. Ver. 28.

B. C. 1160.]

LESSON XIII.

[Sept. 23.]

THE CHILD SAMUEL.—1 Sam. 3. 1-19.

GOLDEN TEXT.—Speak, Lord, for thy servant heareth.—1 SAM. 3. 9.

TIME.—B. C. 1160.

PLACE.—Shiloh, in Central Palestine.

CONNECTING LINKS.—(1) The song of Hannah. 1 Sam. 2. 1-10. (2) The wickedness of Eli's sons. 1 Sam. 2. 12-17. (3) Samuel in the tabernacle. 1 Sam. 2. 18-21. (4) The warning to Eli. 1 Sam. 2. 27-36.

INTRODUCTION.—The call of Samuel to be the prophet and judge of Israel formed a turning-point in the history of the Old Testament kingdom of God. As the prophet of Jehovah, Samuel was to lead the people of Israel out of the times of the Judges into those of the Kings, and lay the foundation for a prosperous development of the monarchy. Consecrated, like Samson, as a Nazarite from his mother's womb, Samuel accomplished the deliverance of Israel out of the power of the Philistines, which had been only commenced by Samson, and that not by the physical might of his arm, but by the spiritual power of his word and prayer, with which he led Israel back from the worship of dead idols to the Lord its God. And while, as one of the Judges, among whom he classes himself in 1 Sam. 12. 11, he brought the office of judge to a close, and introduced the monarchy; as a prophet he laid the foundation of the prophetic office, inasmuch as he was the first to naturalize it, so to speak, in Israel, and develop it into a power that continued henceforth to exert the strongest influence, side by side with the priesthood and monarchy, upon the development of the covenant nation and the kingdom of God.—Keil and Delitzsch.

1 And the child Sam'u-el ministered unto the LORD before E'li. And the

word of the LORD was precious in those days; there was no open vision.

1 Psa. 74. 9;

Amos 8. 11.

1. **Ministered unto the Lord**—Performing such services as a thoughtful child could render, such as lighting the lamps, opening the doors, and waiting upon the high-priest. **Before Eli**—Under his oversight and care. That he was thus, from his very infancy, constantly before the eyes of the people when they attended at the tabernacle, doubtless went far to prepare the way for that influence and station which he ultimately attained.—J. Kitto. **Word of the**

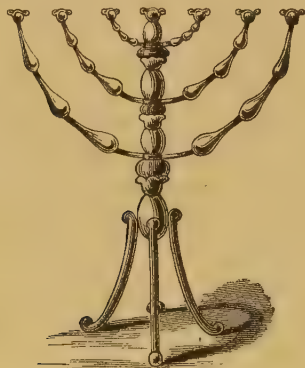
Lord was precious—The meaning is that direct revelations from God had become exceedingly rare, and this fact was owing to the lamentable sinfulness of the priesthood and the people. As sinfulness in the individual heart drives away the Holy Spirit, so in the Hebrew nation it drove away the spirit of prophecy.—D. Steele. The song of Hannah and the prophecy of the "Man of God," (chap. 2. 27, see note,) are the only instances of prophecy since Deb-

2 And it came to pass at that time, when E'li *was* laid down in his place, and his eyes began to wax dim, *that* he could not see;

2 Exod. 27. 21;

orah. Samuel is mentioned as the first of the series of prophets. Acts 3. 24.—*Speaker's Commentary.* **There was no open vision**—Literally, *No divine communication was spread*, that is, published abroad, made known. If perchance God revealed himself to pious individuals here and there, he gave them private revelations, but the persons thus honored were not thereby constituted public prophets, nor sent to publish their communications to the people. In the midst of such spiritual darkness Samuel arose as new luminary in Israel.—*D. Steele.*

2. **It came to pass**—The passage should be rendered thus: "And it came to pass at that time that Eli was sleeping in his place, and his eyes had begun to grow dim, he could not see. And the lamp of God was not yet gone out, and Samuel was sleeping in the temple of the Lord where the ark of God was, and the Lord called



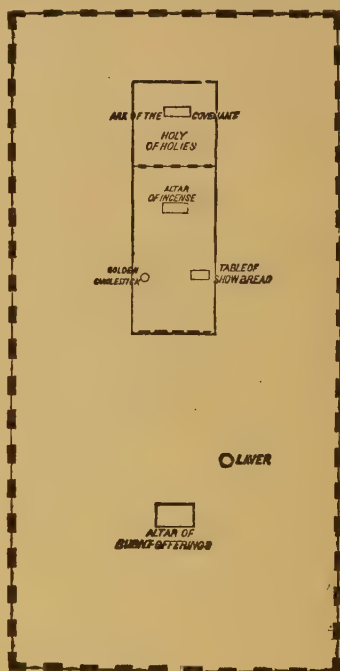
Golden Candlestick.

Samuel," etc. Eli's old age and dimness of sight is probably mentioned as the reason why Samuel thought Eli had called him. Being a blind and feeble old man, he was likely to do so if he wanted any thing, either for himself or for the services of the temple.—*Speaker's Commentary.* **In his place**—In his sleeping apartment, either in the court of the tabernacle or near by it. **His eyes began to wax dim**—He sought retirement the more, because his eyes began to wax dim, an affliction which came justly upon him for winking at his sons' faults.—*M. Henry.*

3 And ere ² the lamp of God went out in the temple of the LORD, where the ark of God *was*, and Sam'u-el was laid down to sleep;

Lev. 24. 3.

3. **The lamp of God**—As afterward in the great temple, so now the high-priest slept in one of the adjacent chambers, and the attendant ministers in another. In the center, on the left of the entrance, stood the seven-branched candlestick, now mentioned for the last time; superseded in the reign of Solomon, by the ten separate candlesticks, but revived after the Captivity by the copy of the one candlestick with seven branches, as it is still seen on the arch of Titus. It was the only light of the tabernacle during the night, was solemnly lighted every



Plan of the Tabernacle.

evening, as in the devotions of the Eastern world, both Mussulman and Christian, and extinguished just before morning when the doors were opened.—*Dean Stanley.* **In the temple of the Lord**—The word "temple" is applied to the tabernacle only here and at Psa. 5. 7. In 2 Sam. 22. 7; Psa. 18. 6, it rather designates heaven, God's temple on high. The use of this

4 That the LORD called Sam'u-el : and he answered, *Here am I*.

5 And he ran unto E'li, and said, *Here am I* ; for thou calledst me. And he said, I called not ; lie down again. And he went and lay down.

6 And the Lord called yet again, Sam'u-el. And Sam'u-el arose and went to E'li, and said, *Here am I* : for thou didst call me. And he

answered, I called not, my son ; lie down again.

7 ^a Now Sam'u-el ² did not yet know the LORD, neither was the word of the LORD yet revealed unto him.

8 And the LORD called Sam'u-el again the third time. And he arose and went to E'li, and said, *Here am I* ; for thou didst call me. And E'li perceived that the LORD had called the child.

^a Or, Thus did Samuel before he knew the Lord, and before the

word of the LORD was revealed unto him.—² Acts 19. 2.

word here is thought by some an indication of the late date of the composition of this passage.—*Speaker's Commentary*. It is probable that in the course of three hundred years since the establishment of the ark at Shiloh, a permanent structure had grown up, replacing the ancient tent. By degrees it became known as "the house of the Lord," "the temple," and when the magnificent building of Solomon was erected, the name which had been gradually growing into use, was formally applied to it. **Where the ark of God was**—The ark of the covenant is mentioned as the throne of the divine presence, from which the call to Samuel proceeded.—*Keil*. **Samuel was laid down**—The ark was placed in the Holy of Holies, which the high-priest alone could enter, and he but once a year. We must not understand, therefore, that Samuel slept in the Holy of Holies. The meaning is only that he slept in the tabernacle, in the building where was the ark, but not in the same room with it.—*F. Johnson*.

4. The Lord called Samuel—By an audible voice, pronouncing his name. He answered, *Here am I*—Hereupon we have an instance, (1) Of Samuel's industry and readiness to wait on Eli. A good example to servants, to come when they are called ; and to the younger, not only to submit to the elder, but to be careful and tender of them. (2) Of his infirmity and unacquaintedness with the visions of the Almighty, that he took that to be only Eli's call which was really the call of God. Such mistakes as these we make oftener than we think of. God calls to us by his word, and we take it to be only the call of the minister, and answer it accordingly ; calls to us by his providences, and we look only at the instruments.—*M. Henry*.

5, 6. He ran unto Eli—He that meant to use Samuel's voice to Eli imitates the voice of Eli to Samuel ; Samuel had so accustomed himself to obedience, and to answer the call of Eli, that, lying in the further cells of the Levites, he is easily raised from his sleep, and even in the

night runs for his message to him who was rather to receive it from him.—*Bishop Hall*. I called thee not—At first, no doubt, he thought the call which Samuel had heard was nothing more than a false impression of the youth, who had been fast asleep.—*Keil*.

7. Did not yet know the Lord—That is, in his supernatural communication, as it follows at the end of the verse.—*Speaker's Commentary*. Neither was the word . . . yet revealed—He knew the written word, and was acquainted with the mind of God in that, but he did not yet apprehend the way in which God reveals himself to his servants the prophets, especially by a *still small voice*.—*M. Henry*. It was not yet uncovered ; afterward the Word was uncovered, (chap. 5. 21,) and his own ear was uncovered to receive it. So it was with the disciples of Christ after his resurrection. Christ did then a double work for them. He opened to them the *Scriptures*, and he opened their hearts to understand them, (Luke 24. 32, 45.)—*C. Wordsworth*.

The witness of the Spirit in the hearts of the faithful is often thus mistaken, by which means they lose the comfort of it ; and the strivings of the Spirit with the consciences of sinners are likewise often mistaken, and so the benefit of their convictions is lost : *God speaketh once, yea twice, but man perceiveth it not*. Job 33. 14.—*M. Henry*.

8. The third time . . . he arose—One cannot help noticing the patience and gentleness of Samuel, rising again and again at what he considers Eli's call. Eli perceived—This would be a mortification to him, and he would apprehend it to be a step toward his family's being degraded, that when God had something to say he should choose to say it to the child Samuel, his servant that waited on him, and not to him. And it would humble him the more when afterward he found it was a message to himself, and yet sent him by a child. He had reason to look upon this as a further token of God's displeasure.—*M. Henry*.

9 Therefore E'li said unto Sam'u-el, Go, lie down: and it shall be, if he call thee, that thou shalt say, Speak, LORD; for thy servant heareth. So Sam'u-el went and lay down in his place.

10 And the LORD came, and stood, and called as at other times, Sam'u-el, Sam'u-el. Then Sam'u-el answered, * Speak; for thy servant heareth.

^a Psa. 85, 8; Acts 9, 6.—^b Chap. 2, 30.

9. Thou shalt say, Speak, Lord.—Had he been envious of this honor done to Samuel, he would have done what he could to deprive him of it, and since he did not perceive it himself, would have bidden him lie down and sleep, and never heed it, it was but a dream; but he was of a better spirit than to act so; he gave him the best advice he could for the forwarding of his advancement. Thus the elder should, without grudging, do the utmost to assist and improve the younger that are rising up, though they see themselves likely to be darkened and eclipsed by them. Let us never be wanting to inform and instruct those that are coming after us, even such as will soon be preferred before us. John 1. 30.—*M. Henry.* Samuel went and lay down—Just imagine the child's throbbing heart, there, in the sacredness and darkness of the tabernacle, hearing the voice of God!—*S. S. Journal.*

10. The Lord came . . . stood . . . called.—From verse 15 we learn that Samuel beheld a *vision* as well as heard a voice, and, therefore, it is most natural to understand the words *came* and *stood* as designating a visible appearance, God was not only *personally* but *visibly* there, either in human form (Gen. 18. 2, 33; Josh. 5. 13-15) or in some angelic or surprising manifestation.—*D. Steele.* Samuel, Samuel—If Samuel's silence had been willful I doubt whether he had been again solicited; now God doth both pity his error and requite his diligence by redoubling his name at the last.—*Bishop Hall.* Speak; for thy servant—This, perhaps, so awed and surprised the child that he omitted the name of the *Lord* from the answer which Eli had directed him to make in case he heard the voice again.—*D. Steele.*

The more sedate and composed our spirits are the better prepared they are for divine discoveries. Let all tumultuous thoughts and passions be kept under, and every thing be quiet and serene in the soul, and then we are fit to hear from God. All must be silent when he speaks.—*M. Henry.*

11 And the LORD said to Sam'u-el, Behold, I will do a thing in Is-ra-el, at which both the ears of every one that heareth it shall tingle.

12 In that day I will perform against E'li all ^a things which I have spoken concerning his house: when I begin, I will also make an end.

13 ^c For I have told him that I will judge his house for ever for the iniquity

^b Beginning and ending.—^c Or, And I will tell him.

11. I will do a thing in Israel—Every Israelite would be struck with terror and astonishment to hear of the slaying of Eli's sons, the breaking of Eli's neck, and the dispersion of Eli's family. Note, God's judgments upon others should affect us with a holy fear. Psalm 119. 120.—*M. Henry.* The ears of every one . . . shall tingle—As a loud, sharp, discordant note thrills one's ears with pain, so the bitter tidings of Israel's woe in the judgment about to fall on Eli's house would shock all Israel. Compare the similar use of this proverbial saying in 2 Kings 21. 12; Jer. 19. 3.—*D. Steele.*

12. I will perform against Eli—The message which God brought was for Eli, whom, on account of his sinful negligence, God would not favor with a personal interview. His sin is specified in ver. 13; and the sins of his sons, whom he failed to restrain, in chap. 2. 12-17, 22-25. The dreadful predictions against the house of Eli were in part fulfilled in the death of his two wretched sons, followed by his own death, (chap. 4. 1-18,) and in the deposition of Abiathar, his descendant, from the office of high-priest in the time of Solomon, 1 Kings 2. 27. His family was never reinstated in the office. The message of God to Eli was very severe; but its severity was not so great as the sin which it rebuked; and the sin of Eli was the greater that God had already warned him against it, (ver. 13. chap. 2. 27-36,) but in vain.—*F. Johnson.* All . . . I have spoken—In the message recorded, chap. 2. 27-36.—*D. Steele.* When I begin—It is intimated that it might, possibly, be some time before he would begin, but let them not call that forbearance an acquittance, nor that reprieve a pardon; for when at length he does begin, he will make thorough work of it, and though he stay long, he will strike home.—*M. Henry.*

13. Judge his house for ever—The priesthood taken away from Eli's descendants was never restored to them; but from the time of Solomon remained in the family of Eleazar.

which he knoweth; because ^e his sons made themselves ^d vile, and he ^e restrained them not.

14 And therefore I have sworn unto the house of E'li, that the iniquity of E'li's house shall ⁷ not be purged with sacrifice nor offering for ever.

^e Chap. 2. 12.—^d Or, accursed.

Made themselves vile—This rendering is very doubtful (though supported by the Vulgate, *indigne agere*), as the word is not so used in any other passage. It invariably means "to curse;" as, *e. g.*, 2 Sam. 16. 5, 7, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13. Hence it would probably be better rendered, *have cursed themselves*, *i. e.*, brought curses upon themselves.—*Speaker's Commentary*. **He restrained them not**—If he did show his dislike of their wicked courses, yet not to that degree that he ought to have done: he did reprove them, but he did not punish them for the mischief they did, nor deprive them of their power to do mischief which, as a father, high-priest, and judge, he might have done.—*M. Henry*.

Indulgent parents are cruel to themselves and their posterity. Eli could not have devised which way to have plagued himself and his house so much as by his kindness to his children's sins.—*Bishop Hall*.

14. **Shall not be purged**—The ordinary sins of the priests and people were purged by the appointed sacrifice, as, *e. g.*, it is said in Num. 15. 25: "And the priest shall make an atonement for all the congregation of the chil-

15 And Sam'u-el lay until the morning, and opened the doors of the house of the LORD. And Sam'u-el feared to show E'li the vision.

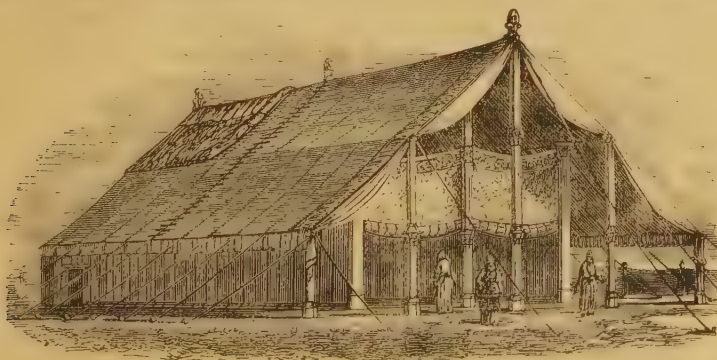
16 Then E'li called Sam'u-el, and said, Sam'u-el, my son. And he answered, Here am I.

17 And he said, What *is* the thing

^e Frowned not upon them.—⁷ Num. 15. 30; Isa. 22. 14.

surance in the New Testament, "The blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from *all* sin." 1 John 1. 7. (Compare Acts 13. 39.)—*Speaker's Commentary*.

15. **Lay until the morning**—The vision took place not long before daybreak, and the words would indicate that Samuel lay awake until the hour for arising. **Opened the doors**—One is surprised to find mention of *doors* to the tabernacle. No mention whatever is made of *doors* in connection with it in Exodus or any of the books of Moses. The word translated *door* in Exod. 26. 36; 36. 37; 1 Kings 6. 33; is quite different, and means *opening* or *entrance* of a tent, gate, etc. Instead of a door, there was only a *hanging* at the entrance of the tabernacle. We first read of *doors* in the description of the temple. 1 Kings 6. 34; 2 Kings 18. 16; etc. It is, however, quite possible that in the interval between Joshua and David, when the tabernacle was stationary for the most part, it may have lost something of its *tent* character, and, among other changes, have had doors instead of the hanging.—*Speaker's Commentary*. **Feared to show Eli**—Here was Samuel's first



Ferguson's Restoration of the Tabernacle.

dren of Israel, and it shall be forgiven them." Compare Heb. 7. 27; 9. 13, etc. But the sin of the sons of Eli could not be so purged. In blessed contrast with this declaration is the as-
 experience of the prophet's cross: the having unwelcome truth to divulge to those he loved, honored, and feared. Jeremiah felt this cross to be an exceedingly heavy one. Jer. 15. 10;
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that *the LORD* hath said unto thee? I pray thee hide *it* not from me: ⁸God do so to thee, and ⁹more also, if thou hide *any* ¹⁰thing from me of all the things that he said unto thee.

18 And Sam'u-el told him ¹¹every

⁸ Ruth 1. 17.—⁹ So add.—¹⁰ Or, word.—¹¹ All the things, or Chap.

17. 15-18; 20. 7-18; etc.—*Speaker's Commentary*.

16, 17. **What is the thing**—It will be observed that the English version supplies the words *the Lord*; but in his question, Eli seems to have intentionally omitted the subject of the verb *said*. His words imply that he himself was uncertain who had called Samuel. He was doubtless strongly persuaded that it was Jehovah, for this had been his conviction when the child came to him the third time, (ver. 8,) but not until Samuel had *told him every whit* (*all the words*, that is, the entire communication of ver. 11-14,) was he absolutely sure.—*D. Steele*. **God do so to thee**. [See note, Lesson XI, ver. 17.] His adjuration, *God do so to thee, if thou hide any thing from me*, may intimate the fearful doom of unfaithful watchmen; if they warn not sinners, they bring upon themselves that wrath and curse which they should have denounced in God's name against those that *go on still in their trespasses*.—*M. Henry*.

18. **Samuel told him every whit**—Samuel's communication, however, simply confirmed to the aged Eli what God had already made known to him through a prophet. But his reply proves that, with all his weakness and criminal indulgence toward his wicked sons, Eli was thoroughly devoted to the Lord in his heart. And Samuel, on the other hand, through his unreserved and candid communication of the terribly solemn word of God with regard to the man whom he certainly venerated with filial affection, not only as high-priest, but also as his own parental guardian, proved himself to be a man possessing the courage and the power to proclaim the word of the Lord without fear to the people of Israel.—*Keil*. **It is the Lord**—This, which every Israelite's ear should tingle to hear of when it should be done, old Eli hears with an unmoved patience and humble submission. O admirable faith and more than human constancy and resolution, worthy of the aged president of Shiloh, worthy of a heart sacrificed to that God whose justice had refused to expiate his sin by sacrifice! If Eli have been an ill father to his sons, yet he is a good son to God, and is ready to kiss the very rod he shall smart withal.—*Bishop Hall*.

whit, and hid nothing from him. And he said, ⁹It is the LORD: let him do what seemeth him good.

19 And Sam'u-el grew, and ¹⁰the LORD was with him, ¹¹and did let none of his words fall to the ground.

words.—⁹ Job 1. 21; Psa. 39. 9; Isa. 39. 8.—¹⁰ Gen. 39. 2. 9, 6.

19. **And Samuel grew**—This shows that Samuel's call to the prophetic office was before he was grown up.—*Speaker's Commentary*. **Did let none of his words fall**—Let none of his prophecies fail of fulfillment, so that it soon became known, far and near, that he was a divinely accredited prophet, and all his sayings surely came to pass.—*D. Steele*.

Authorities to be Consulted.

See the list of authorities on the last lesson, (Kitto, Stanley, Milman, Ewald, Smith, etc.) Bible Educator, ii, 226; Helps and Expositions for 1875, 2d Quarter, Less. VIII, (May 28); F. W. Robertson's Sermons; Guthrie's Sunday Magazine, 1870, 725; Stems and Twigs, ii, 148; i, 26; Freeman's Bible Manners and Customs, No. 142; The Preacher, (London,) vol. v, p. 7; Simeon's Horæ Homileticæ; Robinson's Scripture Characters; Kitto's Daily Bible Illustrations, 28th week; Geikie's Hours with the Bible, vol. iii, chap. 8; Foster's Cyclopaedia of Illustrations [Figures preceded by a star refer to poetical volumes]—vers. 4-10: *3966; ver. 12: 4409; ver. 18: *2450, 4310, 7102, 10895; ver. 18: 4999, 5300, 5505, 5806; ver. 19: 10576.

Practical Root Thoughts.

THE CALL OF GOD.

1. God's call comes to men in times when his guidance and care are most needed. Ver. 1.
2. God's call comes to the one whose life and heart are in God's house. Ver. 3.
3. God's call comes sometimes to the young, while they are yet near him. Ver. 4.
4. God's call comes to the lowly, gentle, and pure in character. Vers. 4-7.
5. God's call is sometimes misunderstood and unheeded by those who ought to recognize it. Vers. 5-8.
6. God's call brings sad as well as glad messages, words of sorrow as well as joy. Ver. 11-14.
7. God's call brings burdens and responsibilities which are not always easy to bear. Ver. 15.
8. God's call requires courage and fidelity on the part of those who receive it. Ver. 18.

FOURTH QUARTER.

STUDIES IN THE OLD TESTAMENT.

B. C. 1141.]

LESSON I.

[Oct. 7.]

ELI'S DEATH.—1 Sam. 4. 10-18.

GOLDEN TEXT.—His sons made themselves vile, and he restrained them not.—1 SAM. 3. 13.

TIME.—B. C. 1141.

PLACE.—Shiloh, in central Palestine.

CONNECTING LINKS.—(1) Israel defeated by the Philistines. 1 Sam. 4. 12. (2) The ark of God brought to the camp. 1 Sam. 4. 3-9.

INTRODUCTION.—The war between the Philistines and Israelites broke out anew; whether the Israelites, encouraged by the destruction of so many of the Philistine chieftains, in the fall of the temple at Gaza, had endeavored to throw off the yoke, or whether the Philistines seized the opportunity of Samson's death to extend their dominion, does not appear. A bloody battle took place at Aphek, in the northern part of Judah, in which the Israelites were totally defeated, and in their desperation they determined to resort to those means of conquest which had proved irresistible under the direction of Joshua. They sent to Shiloh for the ark, and the ark was brought forth from its holy place, for not one tribe only, but the independence, the safety, the existence of the whole nation seemed at issue before these terrible foes. The ark was placed in the center of the camp—the camp, not of Judah alone, but of all Israel. But the days were gone when the rivers dried up, and the walls of cities fell down, and the enemy fled at once, before the symbol of the presence of Israel's God. The measure was unauthorized by the divine command. Yet even the victorious Philistines were not free from hereditary apprehension of the mighty God who had discomfited the Egyptians, and subjugated the whole land of the Canaanites. They exhorted each other to maintain their character for valor. The Israelites fought with desperate but unavailing resolution, the iron chariots of the Philistines triumphed. Thirty thousand Israelites perished, and the ark of God fell into the hands of the uncircumcised, the guilty sons of Eli were slain in its defense.—*H. H. Millman.*

10 And the Phi-lis'tines fought, and
 1 Is'-ra-el was smitten, and they fled every
 man into his tent: and there was a very

great slaughter; for there fell of Is'-ra-el
 thirty thousand footmen.

11 And ²the ark of God was taken;

¹ Lev. 26. 17; Deut. 28. 25; Psa. 78. 9, 62.

² Chap. 2. 32.

10. The Philistines.—See note, Third Quarter, Lesson X, verse 21.



Fought—The battle was fought at Ebenezer. This name was given to the place at a later day, after Jehovah had given Israel a signal victory over the Philistines. Chap. 1. 12. Its men-

tion in 1 Sam. 4. 1 and in chap. 5. 1, before the place had received the name, would naturally be made by an author writing at a later period when this had become the common and well-known name of the place. Both *Ebenezer* and *Aphek* must have been situated some few miles north or north-west of Jerusalem, but their exact locality has not been decided.—*D. Steele.* **Israel was smitten**—Israel was smitten, the army dispersed and totally routed, not retiring into the camp as before, (verse 2,) when they hoped to

rally again, but returning to their tents, every man shifting for his own safety, and making the best of his way home, despairing to make head any more.—*M. Henry.* **Into his tent**—That is, to his habitation, called by the ancient name of his "tent."—*M. Pool.* **Thirty thousand footmen**—Before they lost but four thousand, now, in the presence of the ark thirty thousand, to teach them that the ark and ordinances of God were never designed for sanctuaries or refuges to impenitent sinners, but only for the comfort and relief to those that repent. Horsemen are not mentioned, either, first, because they had few or none, God having forbidden the multiplication of their horses, (Deut. 17. 16,) and the Philistines, their lords and oppressors having taken away what they had; or, secondly, because they fled away, as is usual in such cases, while the footmen were more easily overtaken.—*M. Pool.*

11. The ark of God was taken (See cut of 249)

³and the two sons of E'li, Hoph'ni and Phin'e-has, ^awere slain.

12 And there ran a man of Ben'ja-min out of the army, and came to Shi'loh the same day, with his clothes rent, and ⁴with earth upon his head.

³ Psa. 78. 64. — ^a Died. — ⁴ Josh. 7. 6; † Sam. 13. 19;

the ark, Third Quarter, Lesson II.)—Such a calamity was appalling in an age which associated the presence of God with the symbol now lost, perhaps forever. To the ignorant multitude it would doubtless seem as if, in gaining the ark, the Philistines had also secured the presence and aid of Jehovah, for this was the common idea in the ancient world. It was grievous for the tribes to have lost their God, but to find him in the hands of their enemies was a disaster of inexpressible magnitude.—*O. Geikie*. “The ark of God was taken,” which God justly and wisely permitted, partly to punish the Israelites for their profanation of it; partly, that by taking away the pretenses of their foolish and impious confidence, he might more deeply humble them and bring them to true repentance; partly that the Philistines might by this means be more effectually convinced of God's almighty power, and of their own and their god's impotency, and so a stop might be put to their triumphs and insultations, and to their rage against the poor Israelites, whom otherwise in human appearance they might easily have rooted out. Thus, as God was no loser by this event, so the Philistines were no gainers by it, and Israel, all things considered, received more good than hurt by it, as we shall see.—*M. Pool*. **Two sons of Eli**—See note, Third Quarter, Lesson XIII, verse 13. **Were slain**—It is true the sword devours one as well as another, but these were waited for of the sword, marked for vengeance. They were out of their place; what had they to do in the camp? When men leave the way of their duty, they shut themselves out of God's protection. But this was not all, they had betrayed the ark by bringing it into danger without a warrant from God, and this filled the measure of their iniquities.—*M. Henry*.

It is just the same now, when we take merely a historical Christ outside us for our redeemer. He must prove his help chiefly internally by his Holy Spirit, to redeem us out of the hand of the Philistines, though externally he must not be thrown into the shade, as accomplishing our justification. If we had not Christ we could never stand. For there is no help in heaven and on earth besides him. But if we have him in no

13 And when he came, lo, E'li sat upon ^aa seat by the way-side watching: for his heart trembled for the ark of God. And when the man came into the city, and told *it*, all the city cried out.

15. 32; Neh. 9. 1; Job 2. 12. — ^a Chap. 1. 9.

other way than merely without us and under us, if we only preach about him, teach, hear, read, talk, discuss, and dispute about him, take his name into our mouth, but will not let him work and show his power in us, he will no more help us than the ark helped the Israelites.—*Berleburger Bible*.

12. **And there ran**—Runners who were swift of foot, and could go long distances, were important and well-known persons, and there seem to have been always professional runners to act as messengers with armies in the field.—*Speaker's Commentary*. **A man of Benjamin** The territory of this tribe lay in part between Shiloh and Jerusalem, and it was probably the scene of the battle. The Benjamite was naturally the first to arrive with the intelligence, as better acquainted with the ground to be traversed.—*F. Johnson*. **Came to Shiloh**—The place of the tabernacle. See note, Third Quarter, Lesson XII, verse 24. Shiloh was about twenty miles north of Jerusalem, twelve north of Bethel, and ten south of Shechem. The ruins are now called Seilun by the Arabs. The surrounding scenery is now uninteresting.—*F. Johnson*. **His clothes rent, and with earth upon his head**—These were signs of sorrow and distress among all nations. The clothes rent signified the rending, dividing, and shattering of the people; the earth or ashes on the head signified their humiliation. “We are brought down to the dust of the earth, we are near to our graves.”—*A. Clarke*.

13. **Eli sat upon a seat**—Rather, “upon his throne,” the pontifical chair of state. This seat was probably set at the gate leading into the inner court of the tabernacle. Seated here, the high-priest would see all who came up to worship, and here he would expect to receive the first news of the return of the ark from the camp. When Eli fell off his throne on hearing that the ark was taken, he fell by the side of the gate, that is, the gate of the court.—*Speaker's Commentary*. **By the wayside**—By the gate through which ran “the way” by which the people came to worship. **His heart trembled**—He had a foreboding of disaster. Perhaps the ark had been taken against his judgment, he yielding with characteristic weakness. Such a

14 And when E'li heard the noise of the crying, he said, What *meaneth* the noise of this tumult? And the man came in hastily, and told E'li.

15 Now E'li was ninety and eight years old; and his eyes ^bwere dim, that he could not see.

16 And the man said unto E'li, I am he that came out of the army, and I fled

^b Stood.—2 Sam. 1. 4.

use of the ark, unless authorized by God himself, as in Joshua 3. 7, 8, was little less than a temptation of God, as it put him, in the opinion of the people, under the necessity of giving them the victory in order to save the symbol so intimately associated with his honor. It was an imitation of a heathen custom, (2 Sam. 5. 21,) and had its sources in the wickedness and superstition which distinguished the recreant people.—*F. Johnson*. **For the ark**—It is an indication of Eli's piety that he trembled not for his sons, but for the ark which they had taken with them. **Cried out**—With the loud Oriental wail of mourning. To weep under such circumstances was not considered unmanly by any ancient people.—*F. Johnson*.

All good men lay the interest of God's Church nearer their hearts than any secular interest or concern of their own, and cannot but be in pain and fear for them if at any time they are in peril. How can we be easy if the ark be not safe?—*M. Henry*.

14. What *meaneth* the noise—Eli had probably addressed the question, What *meaneth* the noise of this tumult? to some priests or Levites standing around him, and they had called to the messenger to come and speak to the high priest.—*Speaker's Commentary*. **The man came**—Having made his way through the city to the gate of the tabernacle, spreading sorrow every-where. **Hastily**—This is noted in order to account in some degree for the effect of the intelligence. The news was not broken gently, as it should have been.—*F. Johnson*.

15. His eyes were dim—Eli was ninety-eight years old, and "his eyes stood," that is, were stiff, so that he could no more see. 1 Kings 14. 4. This is a description of the so-called black cataract, (*amurosis*), which generally occurs at a very great age from paralysis of the optic nerves.—*Keil*. Had he been able to see he would have marked the rent garments and dust-besprinkled head of the messenger, and thus the news would have been broken more gradually, and it would not have been such a shock.—*F. Johnson*.

to-day out of the army. And he said, "What 'is there done, my son?"

17 And the messenger answered and said, Is'ra-el is fled before the Phi-lis'tines, and there hath been also a great slaughter among the people, and thy two sons also, Hoph'ni and Phin'e-has, are dead, and the ark of God is taken.

18 And it came to pass, when he

c Is the thing?

16. I am he that came out of the army—I speak not what I have heard by uncertain rumors, but what mine eyes were witnesses of.—*M. Pool*. **What is there done**—Exactly the same words (in the Hebrew) as 2 Sam. 1. 4, *How went the matter?* The turn of the whole narrative there is strikingly similar to this. **My son**—The paternal address of an old man and one in authority to a young one. Comp. Joshua 7. 19; Ruth 2. 8; 3. 10. 18; 1 Tim. 1. 2; 2 Tim. 1. 2, etc.—*Speaker's Commentary*. The kind nature of Eli is manifest in these minute touches of the narrative.—*F. Johnson*. In all the allusions to Eli there is a tone of tenderness, a touch of personality, and a descriptive element, which point to a writer who cherished the recollection of the venerable priest-judge, and loved his memory, despite his faults. The story of Eli shows the pen of Samuel.

17. The messenger answered—The simple, direct, and yet climacteric way in which the messenger tells his tale of sorrow has attracted the notice of all critics. How few the words used to relate all the items of this thrilling message! How each successive statement rises in the announcement of a still severer loss!—*D. Steele*. **Hophni and Phinehas are dead**—Most terrible tidings for a devoted father! And perhaps those sons had gone forth to the field of battle despite the father's prayers and entreaties. Thus was fulfilled the prophecy of the man of God who had before announced the downfall of his house, (chap. 2. 34,) and this was to be for Eli the sign of yet heavier woes. **The ark of God is taken**—The ark was the symbol of the Divine Presence, and its loss foreshadowed, in Eli's mind, the utter destruction of his nation and the abolishment of Jehovah's covenant with them. In Judges 18. 30 this capture of the ark is called "the captivity of the land," so deeply was it, from the theocratic standpoint, identified and associated with the highest interests and holiest hopes of all Israel.—*D. Steele*.

18. When he made mention of the ark—

made mention of the ark of God that he fell from off the seat backward by the side of the gate, and his neck brake, and

he died; for he was an old man, and heavy. And he had judged Is'ra-el forty years.

The patriot could survive the dishonor of his country; the judge, though weeping sore, could be submissive under the slaughter of the people; the father, his heart rent the while with remorseful memories, could have upborne under the double bereavement; but the saint swooned away his life when deeper affliction was narrated of the disaster that had happened to the ark of God.—*W. M. Punshon*. **Backward by the side of the gate**—His seat or throne, without a back, stood with the side against the jamb of the gate, leaving the passage through the gate quite clear, but placed so that every one passing through the gate must pass in front of him.—*Speaker's Commentary*. **His neck brake, and he died**—The bones of the old are brittle and easily broken, as also they are easily dislocated, and the corpulence of Eli made his fall very severe. His affliction does not prove that he was not a child of God; for "what son is he whom his father chasteneth not?"—*F. Johnson*. **An old man, and heavy—Old**, and therefore weak, and apt to fall; **heavy**, and therefore his fall more dangerous and pernicious.—*M. Pool*. **He had judged Israel forty years**—The Septuagint read *twenty years*. It is an interesting question, but one very difficult to answer, how near to the death of Phineas, the son of Eleazer the high-priest, Eli's forty years of judgeship bring him. It is probable that at least one high-priesthood, that of Abishua, or Bukki, intervened, though we have no record of it in Scripture.—*Speaker's Commentary*. After the death of Eli, Shiloh loses all importance as the chief station of the sanctuary, no high-priest again makes it his abode, and the tabernacle itself, so far as it is mentioned in later times, seems stationed elsewhere; we must needs suppose that the Philistines took advantage of that great victory to conquer Shiloh and destroy its famous sanctuary, although the history (which in its present state is much abbreviated throughout) does not even mention it. The city reappears afterward, it is true, as not quite uninhabited, but evidently as only gradually restored, like so many other towns in those times, through the people's indomitable zeal for resettlement after a devastation. But the tabernacle, as might be expected from similar cases, was carried off by watchful Levites before the destruction was complete; and as late as the time of Solomon's building of the temple is found established at Gibeon, in Benjamin.—*H. Ewald*.

Lessons. (1) Parental authority is of God, and should be used for God. (2) The importance of restraining children in youth. (3) God's indignation against vileness in holy places. (4) "It may be long delayed, but vengeance, even though delayed, will come." (5) Disobedience to God and deepest disgrace go together. (6) If God is thus just in his retributions toward his own people, what may the sinner expect? See 1 Peter 4. 18. (7) Symbols and ceremonies without God's authority are useless. (8) The chastening of the Lord. Heb. 12. 5-12. (9) Love for our children should not be greater than the love we have for the cause of God. (10) He who does God's will fully has no need of a trembling heart. 1 John 3. 21; John 14. 1. (11) It is good to be concerned for Zion. God's people sure of final victory.—*S. S. Journal*.

Authorities to be Consulted.

Stanley's Jewish Church, lecture xvii. Milman's History of the Jews, book vi. Smith's Old Testament History, chap. xix. Kitto's History of the Bible, chap. xv. Ewald's History of Israel, vol ii, p. 312. Bishop Hall's Contemplations, book xi, cont. vii, (latter part.) Freeman's Bible Manners and Customs, Nos. 70, 248, 279, 295. W. M. Punshon's sermon on "Solicitude for the Ark of God." Kitto's Daily Bible Illustrations, 28th week. Geikie's Hours with the Bible, vol. iii, chap. ii. See the Lesson Helps for May 30, 1875, [2d Quarter, Lesson IX.] Foster's Cyclopaedia of Illustrations, *3122. [Figures marked with a star relate to poetical quotations.]

Practical Root Thoughts.

[DANGERS TO THE CAUSE OF GOD.]

1. The cause of God is in danger from the opposition of its enemies, the world and sin. Ver. 10.
2. The cause of God is in danger from the worldly tendencies of its professed people. Vers. 10, 11.
3. The cause of God is in danger when its guardians, the consecrated leaders, are unholy and unworthy. Ver. 11.
4. The cause of God is in danger when forms are relied upon for strength, and the Spirit is unsought. Vers. 11, 12.
5. The danger of God's cause brings anxiety and alarm to all who are interested in its welfare. Vers. 12, 18.
6. The danger to God's cause is more terrible to the faithful heart than any personal grief. Vers. 17, 18.

B. C. 1120.]

LESSON II.

[Oct. 14.]

SAMUEL THE JUDGE.—1 Sam. 7. 3-17.

GOLDEN TEXT.—Hitherto hath the Lord helped us.—1 SAM. 7. 12.

TIME.—B. C. 1120.

PLACE.—Mizpeh, in the tribe of Benjamin.

CONNECTING LINKS.—(1) The ark among the Philistines. 1 Sam. 5. 1-12. (2) The return of the ark. 1 Sam. 6. 1-21. (3) The ark at Kirjath-jearim. 1 Sam. 7. 1, 2.

INTRODUCTION.—The twenty years of deep national humiliation and general confusion that followed the defeat of Ebenezer are an absolute blank. All we know is that Samuel was acknowledged in all parts of the country as a great prophet, and was thus quietly preparing for the important events in the nation's history in which he was destined to take a leading part. When he reappears, it is as the judge and deliverer of Israel, summoning the people to national repentance, and leading the armies of the Lord to victory over their enemies, (chap. 7.)—*E. Venables*. Samuel became a Judge in a different sense from his predecessors. He was not a mere warrior or hero raised up to put down a particular foe. He was the restorer of the whole land, one who brought the different parts of it into connection with each other, who made them feel the blessings of a common organization, the necessity and the happiness of being subject to government, the misery of a condition of things in which each man did that which was right in his own eyes. It would appear that the Jews had never, since they came into the promised land, experienced so orderly and righteous a civil government as during the time in which Samuel ruled them.—*F. D. Maurice*. The loss and the recovery of the ark would tend powerfully to consolidate the disorganized realm. The tidings of that awful calamity, the capture of the ark, the seeming abandonment of his people by their God, would sound like a knell in the heart of every one born of Israel. From the foot of Lebanon to the edge of the desert, from the remotest pastures of Gilead to the seacoast of Asher, the dormant religious feeling would be stirred to its depths. Even those who had furtively cast their grain of incense on the altar of Baal would be roused by the terrible shock, and prostrate themselves in penitence, if not in despair. That universal religious movement, from grief, from shame, from fear, would be maddened to tumultuous excitement at the tidings, as rapidly, as widely spread, of the restoration of the inappreciable treasure—Jehovah's return in all his power and majesty to the center of his chosen people.—*Milman*.

3 And Sam'u-el spake unto all the house of Is'ra-el, saying, If ye do ¹return unto the LORD with all your hearts, *then* ²put away the strange gods and ³Ash'ta-roth from among you, and ⁴prepare your hearts unto the

LORD, and ⁵serve him only; and he will deliver you out of the hand of the Phi-lis'tines.

4 Then the children of Is'ra-el did put away Ba'al-im ⁶and Ash'ta-roth, and served the Lord only.

¹ Deut. 30. 2; 1 Kings 8. 48; Isa. 55. 7; Hosea 6. 1; Joel 2. 12.—
Job 11. 13.—² Deut. 6. 13; 10. 20; 13. 4; Josh.

³ Gen. 35. 2; Josh. 24. 14.—⁴ Judg. 2. 13.—⁵ 3 Chron. 30. 10; 24. 14; Matt. 4. 10; Luke 4. 8.—⁶ Judg. 2. 11.

3. And Samuel spake—About twenty years after the loss of the ark. Unto all the house of Israel—Going, as it should seem, from place to place, an itinerant preacher, (for we find not that they were gathered together till verse 5,) and wherever he came this was his exhortation.—*M. Henry*. If ye do return unto the Lord—These words prove decisively that a profession of repentance on the part of Israel had preceded them, since they contain Samuel's answer to such profession, the sincerity of which he puts to the proof. The profession, therefore, must be sought in the preceding words, "All the house of Israel lamented after the Lord.—*Speaker's Commentary*. Put away the strange gods and Ashtaroth—[See note, Third Quarter, Lesson VIII, verses 11-13.] Prepare your hearts—By purging them of all sin, and par-

ticularly from all inclinations to other gods. Or, *direct your hearts*; having alienated your hearts from your idols, turn them to God.—*M. Pool*. The hand of the Philistines—[On the Philistines, see note, Third Quarter, Lesson X, verse 21.] These words plainly imply a Philistine yoke, as the chastisement of their idolatry, of which no details are here given. It is very possible that the above-named twenty years fell in with some portion (probably the last twenty years) of the Philistine oppression described in Judges 13. 1, which is there expressly connected with Israelite idolatry.—*Speaker's Commentary*.

4. Baalim and Ashtaroth—Male and female deities of several of the neighboring nations, especially of the Zidonians. Israel repeatedly fell into the worship of these idol gods.—*D.*

5 And Sam'u-el said, ⁷Gather all Is'-ra-el to Miz'peh, and I will pray for you unto the LORD.

6 And they gathered together to Miz'-peh, and ⁸drew water, and poured it out before the LORD, and fasted ⁹on that day, and said there, ¹⁰We have sinned against the LORD. And Sam'u-el

judged the children of Is'-ra-el in Miz'peh.

7 And when the Phi-lis'tines heard that the children of Is'-ra-el were gathered together to Miz'peh, the lords of the Phi-lis'tines went up against Is'-ra-el. And when the children of Is'-ra-el heard it, they were afraid of the Phi-lis'tines.

⁷ Judges 10. 17; 11. 11; 20. 1; chap. 10. 17; 2 Kings 25. 23.—
¹⁰ Judges 10. 10.

⁸ 2 Samuel 14. 14.—⁹ Neh. 9. 1, 2; Dan. 9. 3; Joel 2. 12.—
1 Kings 8. 47; Psa. 106. 6.

Steele. See note and cuts on Third Quarter, Lesson VIII, verse 13. **Served the Lord only**—Samuel would not begin to work the promised deliverance till the Israelites gave the practical proof of their repentance in the putting away all their false gods. Just so Gideon's mighty deliverance was prefaced by the overthrow of the altar of Baal. Judges 6. 10, 28.—*Speaker's Commentary.*

5. **Gather all Israel**—With like authority Joshua gathered the tribes to Shechem. Joshua 24. 1.—*Speaker's Commentary.* All who can come. They would be men, chiefly; the women and children not being required to attend such great assemblies, and being kept at home, for the most part, by circumstances.—*F. Johnson.*

Mizpeh—A city of Benjamin, (Joshua 18. 26,) principally celebrated for the events recorded in this chapter, and



for the inauguration of Saul. Chap. 10. 1. Its site is a point yet in dispute. Robinson and others place it at the modern Neby Samwil, five miles north-west of Jerusalem.—*D. Steele.*

I will pray for you—So Moses prayed for the people at Rephidim, (Exod. 17. 11, 12,) and for Miriam, (Num. 12. 13;) so Elijah prayed at Carmel, (1 Kings 18. 36, 42;) so Ezra prayed at the evening sacrifice, (Ezra 9. 5;) so the high-priest prayed for the house of Israel on the day of atonement; and so does our Lord Jesus Christ ever live at God's right hand to make intercession for us.—*Speaker's Commentary.*

6. **Drew water, and poured it out**—Dr. Kitto thinks that this act was the confirmation of an oath, a solemn vow, and tells us that such is an Oriental method of confirming an oath or a promise. But, in the absence of any analogous custom recorded in Scripture, (and we have there many forms for oaths,) we adhere to the more common interpretation, and understand this pouring out of water as a symbolical action

indicating their humiliation and contrition before God. Thus the Targum paraphrases it: *They poured out their heart like water in penitence before the Lord.*—*D. Steele.* **Fasted**—A further sign of their repentance and humiliation.—*D. Steele.* **Samuel judged . . . Israel**—This seems to denote the commencement of Samuel's judgeship as having taken place at Mizpeh on this occasion. The functions which Samuel executed there as Judge were twofold, civil and military. As civil judge he did exactly what Moses did, as described in Exod. 18. 13-16, "judged between one and another, and made them know the statutes of God, and his laws; as military judge he did what Othniel, Ehud, Barak, and Gideon had done before him, organized and marshaled the people for effectual resistance to their oppressors, and led them out to victory.—*Speaker's Commentary.*

7. **The Philistines heard**—Such an immense gathering could not be concealed. The Philistines were not greatly in error when they conjectured its character; it was, though not so directly as they supposed, yet indirectly, a movement toward freedom. The Israelites probably came armed as best they could; in those troublous times they would not travel unarmed.—*F. Johnson.* **Lords of the Philistines**—This indicates a military movement, led by the chief men of the nation. These lords probably had but little experience in affairs, as those in power but a few years earlier, perhaps two years, had been slain at the death of Samson. Hence, perhaps, humanly speaking, the continual decadence of the Philistine power from this time forward.—*F. Johnson.* They suspected that the great gathering at Mizpeh was for purposes of war, and these lords were anxious to nip such rebellion in the bud.—*D. Steele.* **Went up**—Philistia was on the sea-coast, Mizpeh in the highlands.—*F. Johnson.* **They were afraid**—Their terror arose from this united invasion by the whole Philistine force. Compare, for an instance of the same loss of courage under the Philistine yoke,

8 And the children of Is'ra-el said to Sam'u-el, "Cease not to cry unto the LORD our God for us, that he will save us out of the hand of the Phi-lis'tines.

9 And Sam'u-el took a sucking lamb, and offered *it for* a burnt offering wholly unto the LORD: and ¹¹ Sam'u-el cried unto the LORD for Is'ra-el; and the LORD ^bheard him.

a Be not silent from us from crying; Isa. 37. 4.—¹¹ Psa. 99. 6; chap. 2. 10;

Judges 15. 11, 12, but in the instance before us the superior weight of character in Samuel, as compared with Samson, turned the scale, and the people shook off their fear, and, trusting in Samuel's prayers, determined on resistance.—*Speaker's Commentary.*

We may be in God's way, and yet meet with distress, nay, when sinners begin to repent and reform, they must expect that Satan will muster all his force against them, and set his instruments on work to the utmost to oppose and discourage them.—*M. Henry.*

8. **Said to Samuel**—The Israelites were all of terror, but too far engaged to recede, their confidence in the favor of God toward their righteous judge induced them to risk their safety on the acceptance of his prayers. His prayers alone were the authority which he wielded, the source of their unwonted bravery, the groundwork of their unexpected triumph.—*H. H. Milman.*
Cease not to cry—The literal rendering, as in the margin, is, *Be not silent from us from crying.* The idea is of a person, say a king or judge, who, when entreated to grant some favor, turns away from the suppliant in stern silence. The second *from* has the force of a negative: "So as not to cry." The exact meaning of our passage may be thus expressed: *Reject not our prayer but cry unto the Lord our God.*—*Speaker's Commentary.* What military preparations were to be made, they would undertake them, but let him continue instant in prayer, perhaps remembering, that when Moses did but let down his hand ever so little, Amalek prevailed.—*M. Henry.*
Unto the Lord our God—*Jehovah our God.* They claim Jehovah as their God, turning from all idols. They feel that only he can save them. They might have fled, every man to his tent. The Philistines, however, would have pursued them and destroyed many. Moreover, Samuel probably assured them, prophetically, of deliverance. They had determined to withstand the foe, yet they trembled. Their trembling made them dependent on God, who encouraged their returning piety

10 And as Sam'u-el was offering up the burnt offering, the Phi-lis'tines drew near to battle against Is'ra-el: ¹² but the LORD thundered with a great thunder on that day upon the Phi-lis'tines, and discomfited them; and they were smitten before Is'ra-el.

11 And the men of Is'ra-el went out of Miz'peh, and pursued the Phi-lis'-

Jer. 15. 1.—^b Or, answered.—¹² Josh. 10. 10; Judg. 4. 15; 2 Sam. 22. 14, 15,

by giving them victory.—*F. Johnson.* **That he will save**—They now feel that if deliverance comes at all, it must come from Jehovah.—*D. Steele.*

9. **Took a sucking lamb**—*A lamb of milk,* that is, young and tender, only seven or eight days old, (Lev. 22. 27,) such "being the most suitable to represent the nation that had wakened up to new life through its conversion to the Lord, and was, as it were, new born." *Keil.* **Offered it**—We need not suppose that Samuel offered this burnt-offering with his own hand, and thus assumed a function of the priesthood. The co-operation of the priests on such occasions being generally understood, no particular reference to that fact was here necessary. Samuel stood by and blessed the sacrifice.—*D. Steele.* **For a burnt-offering wholly**—The passage should be rendered, "*Offered it whole as a burnt-offering,*" etc. For the law of burnt-offerings see Lev. 1. 10-13.—*Speaker's Commentary.* **The Lord heard him**—It should be, "*And the Lord answered him,*" which both brings out the reference of Psa. 99. 6 to this verse more distinctly, and also enables us to understand that the answer was not simply the granting the asked-for deliverance, but the great thunder, which was "the voice of the Lord," the same voice with which the Lord answered Moses, (Exod. 19. 19,) to which allusion is made in Psa. 99. 6, 8.—*Speaker's Commentary.*

10. **As Samuel was offering**—This verse explains more in detail the brief statement in the preceding verse, and shows how and when the answer was given.—*Speaker's Commentary.* **The Lord thundered**—See the last note on the previous verse. It showed, too, that the Jehovah of the Exodus was still powerful to save his people and confound their enemies.—*D. Steele.* **Discomfited them**—A storm of this kind, in a land where storms are rare, and accompanied with heavy rain and hail beating in the face of the Philistines, would terrify them and throw them into confusion.

11. **Went out . . . pursued**—They doubt-

tines, and smote them until *they came* under Beth-car.

12 Then Sam'u-el took a stone, and set it between Miz'peh and Shen, and called the name of it °Eb-en-e'zer, saying, Hitherto hath the LORD helped us.

13 So ¹³ the Phi-lis'tines were subdued, and they ¹⁴ came no more into the coast

^c That is, The stone of help; chap. 4. 1.

less interpreted the thunder as the answer to Samuel's prayer, and, encouraged by this assurance of God's aid, went out boldly against the Philistines, and finding them in a panic from the same thunder, attacked them, and put them to flight, and slew numbers in the pursuit.—*Speaker's Commentary.* **Bethcar**—This place is nowhere else mentioned. It seems to have stood on a hill overhanging the road from the Philistine territory to Mizpeh and close to Ebenezer.—*Speaker's Commentary.*

12. Took a stone—Such memorials were common among ancient peoples, and no event deserved one more than this great victory. See note, Third Quarter, Lesson VI, verses 26, 27. **Mizpeh**—See on verse 6. **Shen**—This word signifies a *tooth*, and seems to have been the name of some projecting eminence or rock having the form of a tooth. Its situation is now unknown. **Ebenezer**—*Stone of help*, a monument to remind Israel that their victories were of the Lord. At this very spot the ark was captured twenty years before, and here it is notable that God now gives them such a wondrous triumph. The contrast between the two events is full of rich suggestions.—*D. Steele.* If ever the people's hard hearts should lose the impressions of this providence, this stone would either revive the remembrance of it, and make them thankful, or remain a standing witness against them for their unthankfulness. — *M. Henry.*

In a spiritual sense, the true Ebenezer of Israel is *Jesus Christ*. He is our *Stone of Help*. He was raised up, like Samuel, in evil days, when the priesthood was degenerate and corrupt, and when the glory of God was about to depart from the literal Israel, and, by extraordinary call and mission, he became the priest and prophet of all true Israelites, and routed our spiritual Philistines so that in his days they can no longer come and hurt us. He set up the true *Stone of Help*, even himself. See Isa. 28. 16: "I lay in Zion for a foundation a stone, a tried stone, a precious corner-stone, a sure foundation."—*C. Wordsworth.*

13. The Philistines were subdued—Not

of Is'ra-el: and the hand of the LORD was against the Phi-lis'tines all the days of Sam'u-el.

14 And the cities which the Phi-lis'tines had taken from Is'ra-el were restored to Is'ra-el, from Ek'ron even unto Gath; and the coasts thereof did Is'ra-el deliver out of the hands of the Phi-

¹³ Judg. 13. 1.—¹⁴ 1 Sam. 13. 5.

conquered as a nation, but thoroughly beaten in the battle. **They came no more**—They came no more so as to obtain a victory and subdue the Israelites as before, yet they did return, so that the hand of the Lord was against them, that is, so that they were repulsed with great slaughter, although they were not actually expelled or the Israelites delivered from tribute and the presence of military garrisons, and that all the days that the judicial life of Samuel lasted, in fact all his life, since they were also smitten by Saul.—*Seb Smith.* **The hand of the Lord was against**—They made repeated attempts to regain their lost cause, and Saul kept up a constant war against them all his days, (chap. 14. 52,) but not until after the death of Samuel did they enter *triumphantly* the coasts of Israel. Chap. 31. 1. While the holy Samuel lived, all their efforts to conquer Israel resulted in defeat. He thus completed the deliverance which Samson began many years before. Judges 13. 5.—*D. Steele.* **All the days of Samuel**—Not, as in verse 15, all the days of his *life*, but all the days of his *government*, when as Judge he ruled over Israel, before they asked for a king.—*Speaker's Commentary.*

14. Cities . . . were restored to Israel—This shows the vigor and success of Samuel's government. He seems not only to have expelled the Philistines from the interior of the Israelitish country, but to have attacked them in their own land, and taken from them the cities, with the adjacent territory, which properly belonged to Israel, but which the Philistines had taken possession of.—*Speaker's Commentary.* **From Ekron even unto Gath**—That is, all the cities within a supposed boundary line running from one of these places to the other, but not including these places themselves, for it nowhere appears that Ekron and Gath had ever hitherto been in possession of the Israelites.—*D. Steele.* **Ekron**, (*emigration*), the most northerly of the five cities of the Philistines, (Josh. 13. 3;) in the lowlands of Judah, (chap. 15. 11;) conquered by Judah, (chap. 15. 45;) now called *Akir*, on a hill twelve miles south-east of Joppa,

lis'tines. And there was peace between Is'ra-el and the Am'o-rites.

15 And Sam'u-el¹⁵ judged Is'ra-el all the days of his life.

16 And he went from year to year^d in circuit to Beth'el, and Gil'gal, and

¹⁵ Chap. 12. 11; Judg. 2. 16.

a wretched village of about fifty mud hovels.—*Schaff*. **Gath**—Thomson would identify it with Eleutheropolis, but Porter, Warren, and Conder, place Gath at *Tel es Safieh*, fifteen miles south of Ramleh, and twelve miles south-east of Ashdod.—*Schaff*. **Peace between Israel and the Amorites** suggests, what is in itself very probable, that in this war the Amorites, finding the Philistines worse masters than the Israelites, made common cause with Samuel, and assisted the Israelites in their wars against the Philistines.—*Speaker's Commentary*. On the Amorites, see Third Quarter, Lesson II, verse 10. Some expositors understand that the word Amorites here designates all the Canaanitish nations besides the Philistines. They were overawed by the great victory of Israel, and thought it wise to make peace with them.—*D. Steele*.

15. **Samuel judged Israel**—He united at least all the southern tribes under his authority, possibly the whole nation. This was his great achievement, the crowning point of his service to Israel and the God of Israel. The scattered and disunited tribes became again a nation. The rival tribes, Ephraim and Judah, make common cause against the common enemy; and the more distant tribes do not seem to withhold their allegiance either from Samuel, the last Judge, or from Saul, the first King of Israel.—*H. H. Milman*. **All the days of his life**—Though Saul superseded him in the government, and was recognized as the anointed king of Israel, yet Samuel never lost his influence over the people; and for him Saul ever had the profoundest reverence. So he actually executed the office of Judge in Israel to the day of his death.—*D. Steele*.

16. **In circuit**—Samuel, leaving his house at Ramah, would pass northward to Beth-el, thence south-easterly to Gilgal, and thence westward to Mizpeh, from which place it would be an easy return to Ramah.—*D. Steele*. When he was at Bethel, the tribe of Ephraim, and all the northern parts of the country, could attend him; when at Gilgal, the tribe of Benjamin, and those beyond Jordan, might have easy access to him; and when at Mizpeh, he was within reach of

Miz'peh, and judged Is'ra-el in all those places.

17 And his return *was* to Ra'mah; for there *was* his house; and there he judged Is'ra-el; and there he built¹⁶ an altar unto the LORD.

^d And he circuited.—¹⁶ Judg. 21. 4.

Judah, Simeon, and Gad.—*A. Clarke*. **Gilgal**—



There were three places of this name in Palestine. Probably the one referred to was that in the Jordan valley, where the camp was established during the conquest. See Third Quarter, Lesson III, verse 10. He judged Israel—As in

former years, he probably summoned to him, on these journeys, the elders of the people, laid before them their duties, reminded them of the miseries of the past when they had forsaken Jehovah and turned to idols, and warned them against any relapse. He would also hear and decide questions between man and man, and he further acted as priest; sacrificing on the altars which had been built at Ramah and the other towns of his "circuit."—*C. Geikie*. **His return was to Ramah**—He probably lived at Shiloh till the time of Eli's death, and then, upon the desolation of the tabernacle, he returned to the home of his infancy, and made it his permanent residence.—*D. Steele*. **Ramah**, which is said to be about six miles from Jerusalem, was the *seat of prophecy* during the life of Samuel; and there it is probable all Israel came to consult him on matters of a spiritual nature, as there was the only altar of God in the land of Israel.—*A. Clarke*. **There he built an altar**—Whether this altar was in connection with the tabernacle or not, we have no means of deciding, since we are in complete ignorance as to where the tabernacle was at this time, or who was high-priest, or where he resided.—*Speaker's Commentary*. Doubtless the shameful conduct of many of the priests at Shiloh had driven not a few in Israel to sacrifice elsewhere, even before the ark was captured. It is possible, however, that Samuel had the tabernacle removed at this time from Shiloh to Ramah. At a later time it was at Nob, and still later at Gibeon.—*D. Steele*. According to the Levitical law, all sacrifices were regularly to be offered before the ark, in the place which the Lord should choose. But while this choice stood suspended, because

Shiloh lay desolate, and no other place was appointed, they sacrificed in *other places*, where *neither the ark nor the tabernacle* was, the tabernacle being void of the ark, which was its principal furniture, and the ark being without a house of God to dwell in. But when the ark was again settled, it *became unlawful to sacrifice in other places*.—*Bishop Patrick.*

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Practical Root Thoughts.

[THE ELEMENTS OF A TRUE REVIVAL.]

1. A true revival begins when God's professed but wandering people return to him with all their hearts. Ver. 3.
2. A true revival is shown by a renunciation of sin and wholehearted consecration to God. Ver. 3, 4.
3. A true revival brings the people together for prayer and renewal of vows. Ver. 5, 6.
4. A true revival is accompanied with sincere confession of sin, and humiliation before God. Ver. 6.
5. A true revival often stirs up the opposition of Satan's kingdom. Ver. 7.
6. A true revival leads God's people to rely wholly on spiritual and divine sources of power in time of need. Ver. 8, 9.
7. A true revival results in deliverance from enemies by the help of the Lord. Ver. 10, 11.
8. A true revival gives renewed life and increased power to God's people. Ver. 14.

B. C. 1095.]

LESSON III.

[Oct. 21.]

ASKING FOR A KING.—1 Sam. 8. 1-10.

GOLDEN TEXT.—It is better to trust in the Lord than to put confidence in princes.—

PSA. 118. 19.

TIME.—B. C. 1095.

PLACE.—Ramah, in Central Palestine.

CONNECTING LINKS.—No events are named between the last lesson and the present, although there is an interval of twenty-five years between them.

INTRODUCTION.—The character of Samuel is, in every stage of his career, one of the grandest in the Old Testament. Standing at the meeting-point of two diverging eras in the national life of Israel—the last of the Judges and the first of the Prophets—the inaugurator of the monarchy, no figure occupies a more prominent place of Jewish history. Nor is there one who challenges a more unqualified admiration. The exquisite beauty of his holy childhood; the vigor and wisdom of his administration as Judge; the calm dignity with which he yields to the demands of the people, and bows to what he feels to be the Divine will; the energy with which he throws himself into the new system, alien as it was to his own personal feelings and cherished convictions; the self-forgetting zeal with which he devotes the whole of his powers to the efficient carrying out of its requirements; his warmth of affection for the youthful monarch who had supplanted him in the popular favor; the depth of his sorrow at the repeated failure of the chosen one whom he had been the instrument of raising to his high office; the reluctance with which he regards the breach as final, and seals Saul's rejection by anointing a successor; all combine to make up a portrait of no ordinary attractiveness on which the mind rests with more complete satisfaction than on most of the heroes of the earlier and less perfect dispensation. This momentous episode in the national drama of Israel is presented to us in four distinct scenes, each impressed with a type of its own and bringing out a separate phase of the prophet's character. (1) The first of these is laid at Ramah, when the elders of Israel, as the representatives of the nation, first present the unwelcome request, and Samuel is made acquainted with the Divine will in the matter. 1 Sam. 8. (2) The second, probably also at Ramah, describes the selection and anointing by Samuel of the divinely-chosen monarch. Chap. 9; 10. 1-16. (3) The third narrates the choice of the king by lot in the general assembly at Mizpah. chap. 10. 17-27. (4) The fourth gives us the confirmation of the election by another national assembly at Gilgal, with Samuel's solemn remonstrance with the people on their disloyalty to their theocratic king and the assertion of his own integrity. Chap. 11. 14; 12.—*E. Venables.*

1 And it came to pass, when Sam'u-el was old, that he ¹made his ²sons judges over Is'-ra-el.

2 Now the name of his first-born was *Jo'el, and the name of his second, A-bi'ah: *they were judges in Be-er-she'ba.*

¹ Deut. 16, 18.—² Judges 10, 4; 12, 14, compared with 5, 10.
³ Exod. 18, 21; 1 Tim. 3, 3; 6, 10.

1. It came to pass—This implies a long period, probably not less than twenty years, of which we have no account except what is contained in the brief notice in chapter 7. 13-17. The general idea conveyed is of a time of peace and prosperity, analogous to that under the other Judges.—*Speaker's Commentary.* **When Samuel was old**—It has been supposed by many learned expositors that Samuel was about sixty years of age at this time, that he continued to act as Judge for about sixteen years after Saul was created king.—*C. Wordsworth.* **He made his sons judges**—Not with authority equal to his own, but assistant judges, who might attend to judicial matters in remote places to which Samuel's age prevented his going.—*D. Steele.* As we do not find that either God or the people censured him for making his sons judges in Israel, we may infer that he had properly educated them, and that they appeared well qualified for the office, and were appointed to it for the good, and by the approbation of, the people.—*Scott.*

He was a man betimes, was full of thoughts and cares when he was a child, which, perhaps, hastened the infirmities of age upon him; the fruits that are first ripe keep the worst. He had spent his strength and spirits in the fatigue of public business, and now, if he thinks to shake himself as at other times, he finds he is mistaken: old age has cut his hair. Those that are in the prime of their time ought to be busy in doing the work of life, for as they go into years, they will find themselves less disposed to it, and less able for it.—*M. Henry.*

2. Judges in Beersheba—Beersheba was on the extreme southern frontier of Judah, as seen in the proverbial, "From Dan to Beersheba." Its close connection with the land of the Philistines appears from Abraham's and Isaac's dealings with the Philistines at Beersheba, as related Gen. 21. 26. It is probable, therefore, that the settling of Samuel's sons as judges in Beersheba was the consequence of that recovery of territory from the usurpation of the Philistines which is mentioned 1 Sam. 7. 14.—*Speaker's Commentary.* **Joel . . . Abiah**—Samuel showed his piety by the names he gave

3 And his sons ³walked not in his ways, but turned aside after ⁴lucre, and ⁵took bribes, and perverted judgment.

4 Then all the elders of Is'ra-el gathered themselves together, and came to Sam'u-el unto Ra'mah,

—³ A Vashni; 1 Chron. 6, 28.—⁴ Eccl. 2, 19; Jer. 22, 15.—⁵ Deut. 16, 18; Psal. 15, 5.

his sons; *Jehovah is God, Jehovah is my Father.*—*C. Wordsworth.* Nothing further than is here stated is known concerning the sons of Samuel.

3. Walked not in his ways—It is not likely that good Samuel was faulty in that indulgence for which his own mouth had denounced God's judgment against Eli; yet this holy man succeeds Eli in his cross as well as his place, though not in his sin, and is afflicted with a wicked succession. God will let us find that grace is by gift, not by inheritance.—*Bishop Hall.* **Turned aside, etc.**—Three evils which cannot be too strongly reprobated in a judge. The Hebrew word here translated *lucre*, means properly *ill-gotten gain*, that which is obtained by violence or fraud. The judge who covetously puts his hand on ill-gotten gain will be easily overcome with bribery, and he who takes bribes will necessarily pervert judgment and truth.—*D. Steele.* **Turned aside after lucre**—The original signifies to *cut, clip, break off*, and, therefore, Mr. Parkhurst thinks that it means nearly the same with our *clipping of coin*. It, however, expresses here the idea of *avarice, of getting money by hook or by crook*.—*A. Clarke.* **Took bribes**—A manifest reference to Deut. 16. 19, (somewhat obscured by the English Version,) where it is said to the judge, "Thou shalt not pervert judgment . . . thou shalt not take a bribe."—*Speaker's Commentary.*

Those that have the most grace themselves, cannot give grace to their children. It has often been the grief of good men to see their posterity, instead of treading in their steps, trampling on them, and, as Job speaks, *marring their path*.—*M. Henry.*

4. All the elders of Israel—It is usually employed to designate a particular class of civil rulers, who were found not only among the Hebrews, but also among the Moabites and Midianites. Num. 22. 7. The name in this sense had its origin in the patriarchal age, when the father, who was the eldest man of the household or clan, governed it, and when the eldest son succeeded to his authority. It is probable that the office was modified in the later development of the Israelitish government, but we know nothing as to the nature of any modifications.

5 And said unto him, Behold, thou art old, and thy sons walk not in thy ways: now ⁶make us a king to judge us like all the nations.

⁶ Hosea 1 3, 10.

The elders were not identical with the heads of tribes, but are distinguished from these. They always appear as the representatives of the people, (Exod. 3. 16; 12. 21,) so much so that *elders* and *people* are occasionally used as equivalent terms. Their authority extended to all matters which concerned the public welfare; nor did the people question their acts even when they disapproved of them, (Joshua 9. 18,) hence it is inferred that they were appointed by a free popular election.—*F. Johnson*. **Gathered themselves together**—Samuel's reformation had awakened in them a sense of order to which they had been strangers before. The words "elders of Israel" themselves show how much had been done to revive the institutions of Moses, to call out the family and tribe sympathies which were at the root of those institutions, and to make them ministers of union, not, as they had been, of division.—*F. D. Maurice*. **Ramah**



Eminence. There were several Ramahs, as the name was a favorite designation of towns situated on hills. The Ramah of the text is unknown. It was probably the home of Elkanah, Samuel's father, (1 Sam.

1. 19; 2. 11;) and it may have been chosen partly on this account, and partly on account of its capabilities of defense, as the residence of Samuel. Here the great prophet was buried. 1 Sam. 25. 1; 28. 3.—*F. Johnson*.

5. Thou art old, and thy sons walk not—The elders presented the matter very skillfully to Samuel, implying (verse 5) that they would be quite content if they could always have him for their ruler, or be sure that he would have a worthy successor, yet Samuel felt personally affronted, and could not but see that there was among the people a growing disaffection with the manner of their government.—*D. Steele*. God designed them a king, a man after his own heart, when Samuel was dead; but they would anticipate God's counsel, and would have one now that Samuel was old.—*M. Henry*. **Make us**—It conduces greatly to the honor of the Hebrews that they attempted this change in their constitution, not by their own power but in accord-

6 But the thing ^bdispleased Sam'u-el, when they said, Give us a king to judge us. And Sam'u-el prayed ⁷unto the LORD.

^b Was evil in the eyes of Samuel.—⁷ Prov. 3. 5.

ance with the principles of the theocracy; they requested it of their King, Jehovah, by the intervention of a prophet, and they effected it without bloodshed—a manifest proof that the time of the Judges was neither what is usually understood by a "barbarous" nor a "heroic age."—*Jahn*. **A king to judge us**—The Eastern mind is so essentially and pervadingly regal, that to be without a sovereign is scarcely an intelligible state of things to an Oriental, and the Israelites must have had occasions to feel that the absence of a king gave them an appearance of inferiority in the eyes of their neighbors, incapable of understanding or appreciating the special and glorious privileges of their position.—*Kitto*. Repeated attacks from the Philistines, who were loth to lose their power over Israel, and a knowledge of warlike intentions on the part of the king of Ammon, (chap. 12. 12,) made them anxious for a military chieftain like the kings of the neighboring nations.—*D. Steele*. Their idea of a king may be summed up in the three points of a *leader* always ready at their head in war, a *judge* provided without interruption by the law of hereditary descent, and a *court* invested with dignity and magnificence. Their reference to the prophet proves that they wished to have the divine sanction to their desire.—

Wm. Smith. **Like all the nations**—Their sin consisted in *not waiting* patiently for God's time, when he might think fit to *give* them a king. It consisted in not leaving the season of the kingdom and the choice of the king in his hands. It consisted in not asking Samuel to inquire of God whether the time had arrived when they might have a king; and in presuming that they were themselves the best judges of what conduced to their own welfare, and needed not to ask counsel of God. It consisted in the unthankfulness and discontent of the people, dissatisfied with their present condition, when "God was their King." It consisted in an eager desire to be "*like all other nations*," who had earthly kings; whereas they ought to have deemed it a high privilege to be *unlike* other nations, in that they had been separated from all other people, (Lev. 20. 26,) and chosen from out of other nations to be a *peculiar treasure*.—*C. Wordsworth*.

6. The thing displeased Samuel—Besides

7 And the LORD said unto Sam'u-el, Harken unto the voice of the people in all that they say unto thee; for ^athey have not rejected thee, but ^bthey have rejected me, that I should not reign over them.

8 According to all the works which they have done since the day that I brought them up out of E'gypt even unto this day, wherewith they have for-

saken me, and served other gods, so do they also unto thee.

9 Now therefore ^chearken unto their voice: ^dhowbeit yet protest solemnly unto them, and show them the manner of the king that shall reign over them.

10 And Sam'u-el told all the words of the LORD unto the people that asked of him a king.

^a Exod. 16, 8.—^b Chap. 10, 19.—^c Or, obey.—^d Or, notwithstanding thou shalt

standing when thou hast solemnly protested against them, then show, etc.

the natural aversion which he felt to being thrust aside after so many years of faithful and laborious service, and the natural prejudice which he would feel, at his age, against a new form of government, he doubtless saw how much of the evil heart of unbelief there was in the desire to have a visible king for their leader, instead of trusting to the invisible Lord who had hitherto led them. But God had his own purpose in setting up the kingdom which was to be typical of the kingdom of his only-begotten Son.—*Speaker's Commentary.* Samuel prayed—A beautiful example of prayer to obtain the composure of ruffled feeling, and to have the judgment directed aright by God's Holy Spirit, where it is in danger of being overswayed by personal motives.—*Speaker's Commentary.*

7. Harken unto the voice of the people—They are to learn what they themselves are, what they would make of themselves, what he would make of them, partly by an experience of the effects of their own willfulness, partly by the results which he brings to pass in spite of that willfulness, nay, by means of it.—*F. D. Maurice.* Not rejected thee, but . . . me—These words imply that, in his intercourse with Jehovah, Samuel had complained that the people had rejected him, and were dissatisfied with his administration; but it was rather against the theocracy itself that their disaffection lay. They failed to understand or acknowledge that their misfortunes came not from lack of power and care on the part of Jehovah, but because of their own sins. Had they humbly and devoutly inquired the will of God in the matter, and asked for a governor after his own heart, and not after the model of the heathen powers, a most propitious change might have been effected in their form of government. To punish them for their ingratitude and disaffection he gave them a king in his anger, and took him away in his wrath. Hos. 13. 11.—*D. Steele.*

8. According to all the works—The same idolatrous tendency, the same unbelief in an in-

visible government, has been in them throughout. With that tendency have I been striving by a series of wonderful, orderly methods; you experience the bitterness of it now. Believe that this is part of your privilege as my servant, to encounter the same kind of opposition which I encounter from the self-will of men; to understand what my heart toward them is through your own.—*F. D. Maurice.* The Lord would comfort Samuel by the assurance that what he was there suffering in the ingratitude of the people God had suffered throughout their history. Now therefore hearken—The *therefore* of the A. V. might be rendered "*so*," or "*yet*," or "*but*," and must not be understood as implying that the ingratitude of the people was *reason* for complying with their request. The drift of the answer is this: Do what the people ask, set a king over them; let not your own wounded feelings interfere to prevent your complying with what is in itself desirable and good. Yet, at the same time, point out to them the inconveniences of the kingdom which they desire.—*Speaker's Commentary.* Protest solemnly unto them—Their ill-judged notions of a monarchy needed rebuke, and a monarchical form of government has its peculiar dangers. Israel must not take the responsibility of adopting that form of government without solemn warning as to the possible and even probable consequences.—*D. Steele.* The manner of the king—The powers and privileges which a king will think it his right to exercise.—*D. Steele.*

10. Samuel told all the words of the Lord—The picture which was then drawn by Samuel (ver. 11-18) exhibits in a lively manner the character of the monarchies which at that time existed in the East, and enables us to ascertain that, whatever changes may have taken place in particular states, the monarchical principle as it then existed has been preserved to this day in its full vigor in the East. This is so true, that there is no royal usage mentioned by Samuel which may not be illustrated and explained

from the modern sovereignties of that part of the world.—*J. Kitto.*

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Practical Root Thoughts.

[REJECTION OF GOD.]

1. When God's leaders pass away or become unable to guide, there is often a declen-

sion from God on the part of the people. Ver. 1.

2. Alienation from God is often caused by the unfaithfulness of God's representatives. Ver. 23.

3. Alienation from God is fostered by association with the world and a desire to be like the world. Ver. 5.

4. The wandering of a people from God is always displeasing to those who truly serve God. Ver. 6.

5. The alienation of the people from God should ever be made a subject of prayer. Ver. 6.

6. The alienation of the people, though disguised by men, is seen its true light by the Lord. Ver. 9.

7. The rejection of God is ungrateful in view of his mercies. Ver. 8.

8. Rejection of God and alienation from him lead inevitably to burden and trouble in the world. Ver. 9.

B. C. 1095.]

LESSON IV.

[Oct. 28.]

SAUL CHOSEN KING.—1 Sam. 10. 17-27.

GOLDEN TEXT.—And all the people shouted, and said, God save the king.—1 SAM. 10. 24.

TIME.—1095 B. C.

PLACE.—Mizpeh, in the tribe of Benjamin.

CONNECTING LINKS.—(1) God's command to Samuel to institute the kingdom. 1 Sam. 8. 22. (2) Samuel's meeting with Saul. 1 Sam. 9. 1-27. (3) The anointing of Saul. 1 Sam. 10. 1-16.

INTRODUCTION.—A youth of singularly tall and striking person, an eminent distinction in the East, arrived at Ramah. He was the son of a Benjamitish chieftain, and had been wandering in search of some asses, a valuable property, which his father had lost. Him Samuel is directed to nominate and receive with regal honors. Giving him the chief seat and distinguished portion at a feast where thirty persons were present, he proceeds privately to anoint Saul as the future king. But the youth was to be prepared for his high office by a course of religious instruction, and his mind imbued with deep and powerful enthusiasm for the national law and national faith. He was sent to one of those schools of the prophets, most likely instituted by Samuel, where the pupils were initiated in the circle of Hebrew education—religious knowledge, religious music, and religious poetry. Here the character of the youth was totally changed; he mingled in the sacred dances; his spirit became full of lofty and aspiring thoughts. So totally was the former levity and carelessness of his youth cast off that his wondering compatriots exclaimed, *Is Saul also among the prophets?* Thus qualified for the royal dignity, at a solemn assembly at Mizpeh, attended, it is distinctly said, by "all the tribes," the small tribe of Benjamin is designated by lot, and Saul, of the tribe of Benjamin, is at once received as king, not indeed without murmur or opposition from some few factious spirits, but by the unanimous consent of the great majority.—*H. H. Milman.*

17 And Sam'u-el called the people together ¹ unto the LORD to ² Miz'peh;

¹ Judg. 11. 11; 20. 1; chap. 11. 15.

17. Samuel called the people—Those who could attend the convention. Many of them, naturally, would be men of comparative wealth and leisure, and hence leaders and chiefs. As

18 And said unto the children of Is'ra-el, Thus ² saith the LORD God of

² Chap. 7. 5.—³ Judg. 6. 8.

it was a warlike age, these were attended, probably, by bands of such soldiers as they commanded. The assembly must have been very large, representing all the tribes. It was

Is'ra-el, I brought up Is'ra-el out of Egypt, and delivered you out of the hand of the E-gyp'tians, and out of the hand of all kingdoms, and of them that oppressed you:

19 And ye have this day rejected your God, who himself saved you out of all your adversities and your tribulations; and ye have said unto him, *Nay*, but set a king over us. Now there-

4 Chap. 8. 7; 12. 12.

important that the king of God's appointment should be exhibited to the representatives of



the whole nation, that none might dispute his authority.—*F. Johnson*. The assembly was like a camp, and the baggage (*impedimenta*) of the whole congregation were probably collected in one place, where the wag-

ons were arranged for protection. Verse 22.—*Speaker's Commentary*. Unto the Lord—To appear before the Lord. So he speaks, either, (1) Because the ark was carried thither upon this occasion; or (2) Because God is present in all the assemblies of his people, whereof this was an eminent one; (see 2 Chron. 19. 6; Psa. 82. 1;) or (3) Because they did in a manner erect a tribunal for God; and entreated, and consequently obtained, his presence there to supervise and direct the whole business by his sentence, which also he did. Verse 19, etc.—*M. Pool*. Mizpeh.—[See note, Lesson II, verses 5, 6.]—Where Samuel himself had brought the people to repentance, and had gained a victory over the Philistines by his prayers. See chap. 7. 5.—*C. Wordsworth*.

18. Thus saith the Lord God—But before proceeding to the election itself Samuel once more charged the people with their sin in rejecting God, who had brought them out of Egypt, and delivered them out of the hand of all their oppressors, by their demand for a king, that he might show them how dangerous was the way which they were taking now, and how bitterly they would perhaps repent of what they had now desired.—*Von Gerlach*. I brought up Israel—Throughout Scripture constant reference is made to the *Exodus*, as the first great national event.—*J. C. Gray*.

There is some great matter of unkindness in it when God hitteth men in the teeth with his former favors.—*J. Trapp*.

fore present yourselves before the LORD by your tribes, and by your thousands.

20 And when Sam'u-el had caused all the tribes of Is'ra-el to come near, the tribe of Ben'ja-min was taken.

21 When he had caused the tribe of Ben'ja-min to come near by their families, the family of Ma'tri was taken, and

5 Josh. 7. 14; Acts 1. 24.

19. Ye have this day rejected your God—You this day declare that you persist in your former act of rejecting God's government.—*M.*

Pool. Who himself saved you—Who by his own special providence took care to raise up judges and saviours for you, and to deliver you at all times, when you needed his help, and did not by your sins obstruct it.—*M. Pool*. Nay, but set a king—Some make their obstinacy in this matter to be a presage of their rejecting Christ, in casting off whom they cast off God, that he should not reign over them.—*M. Henry*. Present yourselves by your tribes—It appears that, in order to find out the proper person who should be made their king, they must determine by lot, (1) The tribe. (2) The thousands or grand divisions by families. (3) The smaller divisions by families. And (4) The individual.—*A. Clarke*. The unction of Saul had been only a private act; the king must receive also a public mission from God in the eyes of all Israel. God observes the same rule in sending forth his priests. Christ was anointed by the Holy Ghost from his mother's womb, but he received a public unction at Jordan, (Matt. 3. 17.) St. Paul was called by Christ from heaven when he was going to Damascus; but he did not go forth as an apostle to the Gentile world till he had received a public mission at Antioch.—*C. Wordsworth*.

20. Caused all the tribes—See the account of the decision by lot in the case of Achan, Third Quarter, Lesson IV, notes on verses 14-18. As the result of the lot was regarded as a divine decision, not only was Saul to be accredited by this act in the sight of the whole nation as the king appointed by the Lord, but he himself was also to be more fully assured of the certainty of his own election on the part of God.—*Keil*.

21. Family of Matri—Not mentioned among the families of Benjamin in Num. 26. 38-41; but probably a new family that arose in Benjamin after the tribal war.—*D. Steele*. Saul... was taken—In the words, "Saul the son of Kish" 263

Saul the son of Kish was taken: and when they sought him, he could not be found.

22 Therefore they ^einquired of the LORD further, if the man should yet come thither. And the LORD answered,

^e Chap.

was taken," the historian proceeds at once to the final result of the casting of the lots, without describing the intermediate steps any further.—*Keil and Delitzsch*. The nomination took place by divine instruction, but may be admired on the plainest principles of human policy. The upright and disinterested Samuel showed no favor to his own family, kindred, or tribe. It was expedient that the king should be chosen from the southern tribes, as more immediately exposed to the most dangerous and implacable enemy. A prince of Asher or of Naphtali might have neglected the interests of Judah and Benjamin. An election from the great rival tribes of Ephraim or Judah might excite mutual jealousy, or dread of a domineering influence among the weaker class.—*H. H. Milman*. **He could not be found**—Saul knew, from his former interview with Samuel, what the result of this casting of lots would be, and probably a feeling of mingled reserve, timidity, and embarrassment led him to hide himself.—*D. Steele*. We may suppose he was at this time really averse to take upon him the government. (1) Because he was conscious to himself of unfitness for so great a trust. He had not been bred up to books, or arms, or courts, and feared he should be guilty of some fatal blunder. (2) Because it would expose him to the envy of his neighbors that were ill affected toward him. (3) Because he understood by what Samuel had said, that the people sinned in asking a king, and it was in anger that God granted their request. (4) Because the affairs of Israel were at this time in a bad posture: the Philistines were strong, the Ammonites threatening, and he must be bold indeed that will set sail in a storm.—*M. Henry*.

22. They inquired of the Lord—The inquiry was made through the high-priest, by means of the Urim and Thummim. There can be no doubt, that in a gathering of the people for so important a purpose as the election of a king, the high-priest would also be present, even though this is not expressly stated. Samuel presided over the meeting as the prophet of the Lord.—*Keil*. **If the man should yet come hither**—Literally, *Has there yet a man come hither?* Has another man, besides those found, come to

Behold, he hath hid himself among the stuff.

23 And they ran and fetched him thence: and when he stood among the people, he was higher than any of the people from his shoulders and upward.

23. 2.

Mizpeh? Has Saul come hither, or is he at home, having not obeyed the summons of Samuel? The form of the question occasions difficulty; but the meaning is plain.—*F. Johnson*. **Among the stuff**—*Utensils, vessels*; that is, the traveling baggage of the assembled people.—*D. Steele*.

23. They ran and fetched him—When dragged into view he was seen to possess all those corporeal advantages which a rude people desiderate in their sovereigns, and the exhibition of which gained for the prince the favorable opinion of Samuel also.—*Jacobus*. **Higher than any of the people from his shoulders**—By which it would appear that he could not have been much less than seven feet high. Great stress is laid upon this, because this distinguished stature, with the impression of bodily prowess which it conveyed, helped much to recommend him to the choice of the people. When from long peace there was no man of distinguished renown among the people; and when in battle much less depended upon military skill than upon bodily prowess of the chief in single combats, or in partial actions with which most battles commenced—it was natural enough that the people take pride in the gigantic proportions of their leader, as calculated to strike terror into the enemy and confidence into his followers; besides that it was no mean advantage that the crest of their leader should, from his tallness, be seen from afar by his people. The prevalence of this feeling of regard for personal bulk and stature is seen in the sculptures of ancient Egypt, Assyria, and Persia, and even in the modern paintings of the last-named nation, in which the sovereign is invested with gigantic proportions in comparison with the persons around him.—*J. Kitto*. In the Mussulman traditions this is the only trait of Saul which is preserved. His name has there been almost lost; he is known only as Thalût, "the tall one." In the Hebrew songs of his own time he was known by a more endearing but not less expressive indication of the same grace. His stately, towering form, standing under the pomegranate-tree above the precipice of Migron, or on the pointed crags of Michmash, or the rocks of Engedi,

24 And Sam'u-el said to all the people, See ye him whom the LORD hath chosen, that *there* is none like him among all the people? And all the people shouted, and said, *God save the king.

^a Let the king live.

claimed for him the title of the "wild roe, the gazelle," perched aloft, "the pride and glory of Israel."—*Dean Stanley*. To this physical excellence, characteristic of his tribe, he added no small share of its ungovernable temper, which opposition and disappointment aggravated to madness, the common fate of despots, as we see in Cambyzes, Caligula, and Paul of Russia. He was the creature of impulse; often kindly, as in his love for David and Jonathan; often noble, as in his patriotic zeal for God; but always wanting the control of steady principle.—*W. Smith*.

24. See . . . whom the Lord hath chosen—From this whole scene it is clear that what is said of the choice of God is not to be understood as an absolute preference for Saul, as being the man best fitted for the king of Israel; but as the selection of one possessing the endowments which would recommend him to the people as the king that they desired. He is commended to the people for the goodness of his outward form; and, in this very same matter of the choice of a king, the same prophet was afterward instructed by God to "look not on his countenance or the height of his stature; . . . for man looketh on the outward appearance, but Jehovah looketh on the heart." Throughout the whole transaction, God was giving the people their own desire; and the history of Saul is the working out of the experiment.—*W. Smith*. **God save the king**—Better, *Live the king!* Equivalent to the French *Vive le roi!* The salutation of royalty.—*D. Steele*. Samuel had told them they would soon be weary of their king, but in the mind they are now in they will never be so; *Let him live*.—*M. Henry*.

Kings are like stars—they rise and set—they have the worship of the world, but no repose.—*Shelley*.

25. Samuel told the people—Though he may not be their judge, yet he will be their prophet, he will instruct if he may not rule; yea, he will instruct him that shall rule.—*Bishop Hall*. **Manner of the kingdom**—This phrase is not identical with the *manner of the king*, described chap. 8. 11-18, for that was a description of what Oriental despots claimed as

25 Then Sam'u-el told the people the ⁷manner of the kingdom, and wrote *it* in a book, and laid it up before the LORD. And Sam'u-el sent all the people away, every man to his house.

26 And Saul also went home to Gib'e-

[†]Deut. 17. 14; chap. 8. 11.

their right, while this was probably an expansion of the Mosaic law concerning a monarchy, as recorded Deut. 17. 14-20. Hence, it appears that the kingdom of Israel was a *constitutional*, not an *absolute monarchy*. The king himself was to be governed and guided by law, and ever to understand that government itself was a divine ordinance, not a human invention.—*D. Steele*. It is the right which regulated the attitude of the earthly monarchy in the theocracy, and determined the duties and rights of the human king in relation to Jehovah, the divine king, on the one hand, and the nation on the other. This right could only be laid down by a prophet like Samuel, to raise a wholesome barrier at the very outset against all excesses on the part of the king.—*Keil*. **Laid it up before the LORD**—Committed it to the charge of the priests as Moses did the law. Deut. 31. 9, 26. The ark and the tabernacle were at this time separate, and it is uncertain in which of them this book of Samuel was placed. Perhaps this disorganized state of the priesthood was a cause of the loss of many ancient books.—*D. Steele*. **Sent all the people away**—Here were no votes passed, nor, for aught that appears, so much as a motion made, for the raising of money to support the dignity of their new elected king; if, therefore, he afterward think fit to take what they do not think fit to give, (which it was necessary that he should have,) they must thank themselves. They went every man to his house, pleased with the name of a king over them, and *Saul went home to Gibeah*, to his father's house, not puffed up with the name of a kingdom under him.—*M. Henry*.

Earthly monarchs must walk by a rule which, if they transgress, they shall be accountable to Him that is higher than the highest who hath deputed them.—*Bishop Hall*.

26. Saul . . . went home—Even after the election by lot at Mizpeh, Saul did not seize upon the reins of government at once, but returned to his father's house in Gibeah, and to his former agricultural occupation; not, however, merely from personal humility and want of ambition, but rather from a correct estimate of the circumstances. The monarchy was something

ah; and there went with him a band of men, whose hearts God had touched.

27 But ^a the children of Belial said,

^a Chap. 11. 12; Deut. 13. 13.—² Sam. 8. 2; 1 Kings 4. 21; as though he

so new in Israel, that the king could not expect a general and voluntary recognition of his regal dignity and authority, especially after the conduct of the worthless people mentioned in chap. 10. 27, until he had answered their expectations from a king (chap. 8. 6, 20) and proved himself a deliverer of Israel from its foes by a victorious campaign. But as Jehovah had chosen him ruler over his people without any seeking on his part, he would wait for higher instructions to act before he entered upon the government. The opportunity was soon given him.—*Keil*. **Gibeah** means *a hill*, and was probably the common name of several places. This place was probably four miles north of Jerusalem, and east of the road from Jerusalem to Shechem. It is now called *Tulleil-el-Ful*, "hill of beans." **A band of men**—Rather, *the host*, but perhaps with reference to the phrase, "men of valor," as we might say *the valor*, meaning the *valiant men*. There seems to be an opposition intended between the valiant host and the children of Belial in the next verse.—*Speaker's Commentary*. **Whose hearts God had touched**—That is, either (1) disposed or inclined to this work; or (2) affected or renewed by his grace and good Spirit working upon their hearts, those that feared God and made conscience of their duty.—*M. Pool*. Who had been peculiarly affected by the scenes of the election they had witnessed at Mizpeh, and who were inwardly drawn by the Divine influence to love and admire the new sovereign.—*D. Steele*.

Whatever good there is in us, or is done by us, at any time, it must be ascribed to the grace of God. If the heart bend at any time the right way, it is because he has touched it. One touch is enough when it is divine.—*M. Henry*.

A young man's best companions are men whose heart God has touched. When God touches the heart he makes it (1) Loving, hence they are united—"a band." (2) Faithful, they were true when others despised him. Ver. 27. (3) Kind, they went home with him for company and safety. Learn: Seek for friends those whose hearts God has touched.—*The Hive*.

27. **The children of Belial**—The Hebrew word *beliyāl*, rendered as a proper name here and frequently elsewhere in the Old Testament, means *worthlessness, lowness*. Our transla-

How shall this man save us? And they despised him,^a and brought him no presents. But he^b held his peace.

10. 25; 2 Chron. 17. 5; Psa. 72. 10; Matt. 2. 11.—^b Or, he was had been deaf.

tors have rendered it variously, *wicked*, (Deut. 15. 9;) *evil*, (Psa. 41. 8;) *naughty*, (Prov. 6. 12;) *ungodly*, (Prov. 16. 27;) and scholars are now generally agreed that it is nowhere to be taken as a proper name.—*D. Steele*. **How shall this man save us**—The fact that Saul was permitted to return again to private life after all Israel's clamor for a king, and notwithstanding the enthusiasm that prevailed at his election at Mizpeh, shows that there was considerable disaffection and disappointment among the people over his appointment. The salutations of royalty that at first greeted him on that proud occasion soon died away. There was probably a feeling that he was too obscure a person, and of insufficient age and experience, to be suddenly advanced to the head of the nation.—*D. Steele*. Seeing that the tribe of Benjamin was, from its geographical position, closely connected with, and in some degree dependent on, that of Judah, it is probable that the dissentients were of the haughtier and turbulent tribe of Ephraim.

—*J. Kitto*. **And brought him no presents**—(*Minchah*.) The *minchah* was the token of homage and acknowledgment from the subject to the sovereign, and from the tributary nation to their suzerain. See 2 Sam. 8. 2, 6; Judges 3. 17, 18; 1 Kings 4. 21; 2 Kings 17. 4, etc.; Psa. 72. 10; Isa. 16. 1.—*Speaker's Commentary*. The marginal references here show how uniform a custom it was for persons to show their obedience or respect to one of high position, particularly to a king, by bringing him a present. To neglect such a token of honor would be to treat a monarch with contempt.—*D. Steele*. **Held his peace**—Literally, *he was as being deaf*. He maintained a prudent reserve, deeming it inexpedient and unwise to begin his reign by using his royal power to crush a few worthless fellows who were unworthy at present of so much attention. But while perhaps only a few were outspoken in their disloyalty, it seems from what followed that there was quite a wide-spread disaffection, and Saul's public inauguration and solemn consecration, as the Lord's anointed, were reserved for a more suitable occasion.—*D. Steele*.

There are fine natural elements of character in this young monarch; something far more to be admired than the mere goodness of outward form and stature. It is no cold-blooded Absalom

that is here, no son that could use his beauty to steal allegiance from his father's throne, and without a pang could see his weeping parent driven as an exile from his own capital. No boastful Rehoboam who, raw and inexperienced, steps with self-complacency into a throne and thinks himself wiser than all the elders. No bloody Jehoram, whose first act of power is to deluge the land with the blood of her best born. No truer filial heart than Saul's. It is with a timid, trembling step he ascends the throne. His first exercise of power is to rescue Israel from threatened bondage, and his first opportunity of vengeance he turns into an opportunity of forgiveness.—*W. Hanna.*

Authorities to be Consulted.

Stanley's Jewish Church, Lecture xxi. Ewald's History of Israel, vol. iii. Kitto's History of the Bible, chap. xv. Milman's History of the Jews, book vi. Smith's Old Testament History, chap. xx. Bible Educator, iii, 32. Guthrie's Sunday Magazine, vol. i, p. 21, (article by Dr. Hanna.) Bishop Hall's Contemplations, book xii, cont. v. Lesson-helps for 1875, on Second Quarter, Lesson XII, June 20.

Kitto's Daily Bible Illustrations, 30th week. Prophets and Kings, (F. D. Maurice,) Sermon ii. Geikie's Hours with the Bible, vol. iii, chap. iv.

Practical Root Thoughts.

[GOD'S PROVIDENCE.]

1. God's providence is shown in his guidance and care over his people in all their history. Vers. 17, 18.
2. God's providence is shown in the deliverance of his people from their enemies. Ver. 18.
3. God's providence over his people is manifested, notwithstanding their ingratitude and neglect. Ver. 19.
4. God's providence is shown in his overruling the sins and errors of men for the furtherance of his plans. Ver. 19.
5. God's providence is shown in his choice of instrumentalities. Vers. 20, 21.
6. God's providence is shown in his knowledge of individuals. Ver. 22.
7. God's providence is shown in his power to touch the hearts of those who engage in his work. Ver. 26.

B. C. 1095.]

LESSON V.

[Nov. 4.]

SAMUEL'S FAREWELL ADDRESS.—1 Sam. 12. 13-25.

GOLDEN TEXT.—Only fear the Lord, and serve him in truth with all your heart: for consider how great things he hath done for you.—1 Sam. 12. 24.

TIME.—1095 B. C.

PLACE.—Gilgal, in the Jordan valley.

CONNECTING LINKS.—(1) The invasion of the Ammonites. 1 Sam. 11. 1-3. (2) The relief of Jabesh-gilead. 1 Sam. 11. 4-13. (3) The renewal of the kingdom at Gilgal. 1 Sam. 11. 14, 15.

INTRODUCTION.—Saul's first measure as King of Israel was bold, and answerable to the public expectation, as showing that the strength and vigilance of the royal power would extend its protection to the remotest part of the commonwealth. Nabash, King of the Ammonites, had invaded the trans-Jordanic tribes, and now besieged the town of Jabesh in Gilead. He demanded that the inhabitants should submit to have their eyes put out; a revolting act of cruelty, which he had exacted as a sign of subjection from all the people whom he had subdued. The inhabitants sent in all haste to the king for succor. Saul instantly hewed a yoke of oxen to pieces, and sent this sign, like the fiery cross of the Highlanders, to summon all the tribe of Israel. The army mustered to the number of 330,000 men. The Ammonites were totally defeated and dispersed. The young king signalized his victory by an act of mercy; though persuaded to use his power to revenge himself on the factious persons who had opposed his elevation, he refused, and declared that the life of no Israelite should be sacrificed at such a period of public rejoicing. Encouraged by this prosperous commencement, Samuel assembled the people at Gilgal. Here the upright magistrate solemnly appeared to the whole assembly to bear witness to the justice and integrity of his administration; invited their scrutiny, and defied their censure; and thus, having given a public account of his charge, rebuked the people, both by his own words, and a sign from heaven, a thunder-storm at the unusual time of the wheat harvest, for their innovation on the established constitution without direct pre-instruction from heaven, he surrendered his judicial authority, and proceeded to the formal inauguration of the king elect.—*H. H. Mūman.* The address consists of three parts. (1) Samuel's self-vindication, 1-5. (2) A brief historical review of the theocracy from its beginning up to the time of Saul's inauguration, 6-13. (3) Solemn exhortation to obedience, on the ground that this revolution in the government was offensive to Jehovah, to which, during an awful pause, (16-19,) a miraculous confirmation is given from the heavens, 14-25.—*D. Steele.*

13 Now therefore behold the king whom ye have chosen, and whom ye have desired! and, behold, ¹the LORD hath set a king over you.

14 If ye will ²fear the LORD, and serve him, and obey his voice, and not rebel against the ³commandment of the LORD, then shall both ye and also the king that reigneth over you ⁴continue following the LORD your God.

¹ Hosea 13. 11.—² Deut. 6. 13; 10. 12; 13. 4; 14. 23; 17. 19;
³ Be after.—⁴ Lev. 26. 14; Deut. 28. 15; Josh. 24. 20.

13. Behold the king—After a brief recital of the events during his own administration. Samuel introduces to the people once more the king, who was now his successor, though still in a measure under his inspired direction. **Whom ye have chosen**—Though God choose him by lot, yet the people are said to chose him; either generally, because they chose that form of government, or particularly, because they approved of God's choice, (chap. 10. 24,) and confirmed it, chap. 11. 15.—*M. Pool*. **The LORD hath set a king over you**—The thought is brought out still more strongly, that Jehovah had fulfilled the desire of the people. Although the request of the people had been an act of hostility to God, yet Jehovah had fulfilled it.—*Keil*.

14. If ye will fear—Here we see the true prophet as emphatically *the man of God*, the messenger of Jehovah, commissioned to reveal the divine will, to rebuke the wickedness of kings and peoples, and to pronounce the judgments that would surely follow personal and national sins. He was the spiritual watchman whom Jehovah set over his people to reveal the great truths of the divine government, and apply them to the leading persons and events of his age.—*D. Steele*. **And serve him**—Translate, *If ye will fear the Lord, and serve him, and obey his voice, so as not to rebel against the mouth of the Lord, and will be, both you and your king that reigns over you, followers after the Lord your God* well: the apodosis being understood as Exod. 32. 32.—*Speaker's Commentary*. It is virtually equivalent to the wish, "*O that ye would only!*"—*Keil*. **Continue following**—On condition that ye rebel no more, God will take you and your king under his merciful protection, and he and his kingdom shall be confirmed and continued.—*A. Clarke*. There was no necessary evil in their having a king, and if both king and subjects reverence God, the nation shall be as prosperous and happy as ever. Some other form of government might have been better;

15 But if ye will ²not obey the voice of the LORD, but rebel against the commandment of the LORD, then shall the hand of the LORD be against you, as it *was* against your fathers.

16 Now therefore stand and see this great thing, which the LORD will do before your eyes.

17 *Is it not* ⁴wheat harvest to-day? ⁵I will call unto the LORD, and he shall send thunder and rain; that ye may per-

¹ 1. 12; 13; Josh. 24. 14; Psa. 81. 13; Eccl. 8. 12.—*a* Mouth.—
² Prov. 26. 1.—³ Josh. 10. 12; chap. 7. 9; James 5. 16.

but if the king and people will meet the true conditions of national permanence, the monarchy shall be blessed and honored. A failure to recognize and observe the commandments of God will sooner or later ruin any nation, no matter what its form of government.—*D. Steele*. **Then shall the hand of the LORD**—You shall have no advantage in that point by the change of government, nor shall your kings be able to protect you against God's displeasure.—*M. Pool*.

15. If ye will not obey—Samuel sees very plainly that in changing the outward forms of government, the people have not changed their hearts, but are likely to fall into their old sins and to suffer their old penalties. **As it was against your fathers**—The allusion to the fathers is very suitable here, because the people were looking to the king for the removal of all the calamities, which had fallen upon them from time immemorial.—*Keil*.

The two courses (ver. 14, 15.) Samuel here places before the people two courses. I. One of which they were bound to follow. There was no middle course. Man cannot be neutral. II. We have the results of obedience and of disobedience set clearly forth. III. Such a presenting of the truth should bring us to immediate decision.—*J. C. Gray*.

16, 17. Stand and see—By standing he intends not the posture of their bodies, but the consistency of their minds, by serious and fixed consideration.—*M. Pool*. **This great thing**—Rain in the time of harvest was a strange thing to a Hebrew. Prov. 26. 1.—*W. Robinson*. **Wheat harvest**—Between May 15 and June 15. Jerome's testimony, (that of an eye-witness,) "I have never seen rain in the end of June or in July in Judea," is borne out by modern travelers.—*Speaker's Commentary*. **I will call**—He speaks with the consciousness of the power that dwelt in a righteous man's prayer. James 5. 16, 17. **He will send thunder and rain**—By this Samuel made it appear, not only what a

ceive and see that ⁶your wickedness *is* great, which ye have done in the sight of the LORD, in asking you a king.

18 So Sam'u-el called unto the LORD; and the LORD sent thunder and rain that day: ⁷and all the people greatly feared the LORD and Sam'u-el.

19 And all the people said unto Sam'u-el, ⁸Pray for thy servants unto the

⁶ Chap. 8. 7; Hosea 13. 10.—⁷ Exra 10. 9.—⁸ Exod. 9. 28; 10. 17;

powerful influence God has upon this earth, that he could, of a sudden, when natural causes did not work toward it, produce this dreadful rain and thunder, and bring them out of his treasures, (Psalm 135. 7,) but also what a powerful interest *he* had in heaven, that God would thus *hearken to the voice of a man*, (Josh. 10. 14,) and answer him *in the secret place of thunder*. Psalm 81. 7. Samuel, that son of prayer, was still famous for success in prayer.—*M. Henry*. **That ye may perceive . . . your wickedness**—They were now rejoicing before God in and with their king, and offering to God the sacrifices of praise, which they hoped God would accept of; and this perhaps made them think that there was no harm in their asking a king, but really they had done well in it; therefore Samuel here charges it upon them as their sin, as wickedness, *great wickedness in the sight of the Lord*.—*M. Henry*. That by this unseasonable and pernicious storm you may understand that God is displeased with you; and also how foolishly and wickedly you have done in rejecting the government of that God at whose command are all things, both in heaven and in earth.—*M. Pool*. **In asking you a king**—[See note, Lesson III, verse 5.]—Their wickedness was not in the mere fact of their asking for a king, but in the manner and spirit with which they urged the matter, and in which they ungratefully cast reflections on the marvelous deliverances of God. The heathenish tendencies, too—the love of heathen customs indicated in their specific request for a king *like the nations*—intensified the sinful reflection on God's mercies.—*D. Steele*.

18. **The Lord sent sent thunder and rain**—When God sent thunder and rain on that day in answer to Samuel's appeal to him, this was a miracle of divine omnipotence, intended to show to the people that the judgments of God might fall upon the sinners at any time. Thunderings, as "the voices of God," (Exod. 9. 28,) are harbingers of judgment.—*Keil*. **Greatly feared the Lord**—They dreaded his terrible majesty, and *they feared Samuel*, perceiving that he had

LORD thy God, that we die not: for we have added unto all our sins *this* evil, to ask us a king.

20 And Sam'u-el said unto the people, Fear not: (ye have done all this wickedness: yet turn not aside from following the LORD, but serve the LORD with all your heart;

21 And turn ye not aside: ⁹for *then*

James 5. 15; 1 John 5. 16.—⁹ Jer. 16. 19; Hab. 2. 18; 1 Cor. 8. 4.

so much power with God.—*A. Clarke*. Every crack of thunder spake judgment against the rebellious Israelites, and every drop of rain was a witness of their sin; and now they found they had displeased him which ruleth in heaven, by rejecting the man that ruled for him on earth. The thundering voice of God, that had lately in their sight confounded the Philistines, they now understood to speak fearful things against them. No marvel if they now fell upon their knees, not to Saul, whom they had chosen, but to Samuel, who, being thus cast off by them, is thus countenanced in heaven.—*Bishop Hall*. **And Samuel**—They felt that Samuel's thoughts and feelings and those of Jehovah were the same. Jehovah's true representative was among them.—*D. Steele*.

19. **Pray for thy servants**—Samuel plays the same part as mediator which Moses did. Exod. 9. 28; 10. 17; 20. 19.—*Speaker's Commentary*. **That we die not**—They had seen the Philistines overwhelmed when Samuel's cry brought thunder and rain upon them, [Lesson II,] and now they feared a like fate for themselves. **We have added . . . this evil**—The outward miraculous token made an impression upon them which all of Samuel's earnest words failed to make. **To ask us a king**—It is no sin to have a king; a good king is one of the greatest blessings of God's providence; but it is a sin to put a *man* in the place of God.—*A. Clarke*.

20. **Fear not**—Do not yield yourselves to inordinate terror, for even after all your rebellions, if now ye serve him *with all your heart*, he will be found plenteous in mercy.—*D. Steele*. **Ye have done**—It is true that you have done wickedly; but still God will be gracious if you hereafter follow him.—*F. Johnson*. *Ye* is emphatic, and would be best rendered in English by the addition of *indeed*, "*Ye have indeed done all this wickedness*," etc.—*Speaker's Commentary*. **Turn ye not**—"Only turn not." The past you may lament, but you cannot reverse. The future, however, you can devote fully to God.—*F. Johnson*. **But serve the Lord**—Samuel

should ye go after vain things, which cannot profit nor deliver; for they are vain:)

22 For the LORD will not forsake his people ¹⁹for his great name's sake: because ²¹it hath pleased the LORD to make you his people.

¹⁰ Ps. 107. 8; Jer. 14. 21.—¹¹ Mal. 1. 2.—¹² 1 Cor. 9. 16.—
¹³ 1 Kings 8. 36;

thereupon announced to them, first of all, that the Lord would not forsake his people for his great name's sake if they would only serve him with uprightness. In order, however, to give no encouragement to any false trust in the covenant faithfulness of the Lord, after the comforting words, "*Fear not,*" he told them again very decidedly that they had done wrong, but that now they were not to turn away from the Lord, but to serve him with all their heart, and not go after vain idols.—*Keil.*

21. For then should ye go—The word *for* is a manifest clerical error caused by the scribe looking on to the word *for* at the end of the verse, or at the beginning of verse 22, and destroys the sense. If it is put out of the text, verse 21 will run, "*And do not turn aside after vain things,*" etc., as in the Septuagint, Vulgate, and all the ancient versions.—*Speaker's Commentary.* After vain things—That is, idols; which he calls here by the same expression found in Gen. 1. 2. The earth was *waste, empty, and formless*; so idols; they are *confusion*, and things of *naught*, for an idol is *nothing in the world*—it is not the representative of any intelligent being.—*A. Clarke.* Vain things; so idols are called, (Deut. 32. 21; Jer. 2. 5,) and so they are, being mere *nothings*, (1 Cor. 8. 4,) having no divinity nor power in them; no influence upon us, nor use or benefit to us.—*M. Poole.*

22. The Lord will not forsake—He will not as yet cast you off, though you have deserved it. His purpose in preserving them in their land and religion was not yet accomplished. It was not, however, *for their sake* that he would not cast them off, but *for his own great name's sake*. He drew his reasons from himself.—*A. Clarke.* For his great name's sake—He does not preserve you on account of your goodness, for you are great sinners, but in order to secure his glory, and the salvation of souls who must be lost if his name is lost from among men.—*F. Johnson.* To make you his people—The emphasis lies upon *his*. This the Israelites could only be when they proved themselves to be the people of God, by serving Jehovah with all their heart.—*Keil.* God's choice of Israel was not an arbitrary deci-

23 Moreover as for me, ¹²God forbid that I should sin against the LORD in ceasing to pray for you: but I will teach you the good ¹³and the right way:

24 Only fear the LORD, and serve him

^c From ceasing; Acts 12. 5; Rom. 1. 9; Col. 1. 9; 2 Tim. 1. 3.—
² Chron. 6. 27; Jer. 6. 16.

sion to honor his people at the expense of other nations. The interest of all mankind to the end of time was involved in the perpetuation of God's law. The nations of men were not fit to receive it, therefore God chose *this* people, trained them, disciplined them, and kept at all times a small remnant of them faithful, despite the constant tendency of the race to decline into sin, until such a time as earth could be made ready to receive the Gospel and they were prepared to impart it.

23. God forbid that I should sin—It is a sin against God not to pray for the Israel of God, especially for those of them that are under our charge, and good men are afraid of the guilt of omissions.—*M. Henry.* In ceasing to pray for you—What a grandeur and sublime excellency of character! Though rejected by an ungrateful people, yet for them shall his prayers unceasingly ascend. To do otherwise would, in his mind, be to sin against Jehovah.—*D. Steele.* I will teach you—They asked him only to pray for them, but he promises to do more for them, not only to pray for them, but to teach them; though they were not willing to be under his government as a judge, he would not, therefore, deny them his instructions as a prophet.—*M. Henry.* In this he sets a glorious example to all rulers, showing them that they should not be led astray by the ingratitude of their subordinates or subjects, and give up on that account all interest in their welfare, but should rather persevere all the more in their anxiety for them.—*Berleburger Bible.*

24. Fear the Lord—In verse 20 the Israelites are directed to fear not, and in verse 24 they are exhorted to fear Jehovah. The first kind of fear mentioned is slavish awe, such as they feel who do not believe in the mercy of God; the second is the filial awe with which we should approach such holiness and majesty. When it is said that perfect love casts out fear, the inspired writer refers to slavish and unbelieving fear, and not to reverence.—*F. Johnson.* Serve him—Consider him your Lord and Master, consider yourselves his servants.—*A. Clarke.* In truth—Be ever honest, ever sincere with all your heart, have every affection engaged in the work of obedience; act not merely from a prin-

in truth with all your ¹⁴heart: for consider ^dhow great *things* he hath done for you.

¹⁴ Ezra 9, 13. — ^dOr, what a great thing, etc.

ciple of *duty*, but also from a *pious, affectionate sense* of obligation. Act toward your God as an affectionate *child* should act toward a tender and loving *parent*. Consider how great *things*—Review the history of your *fathers*, review your own life, see what interpositions of power, mercy, goodness, and truth God has displayed in your behalf.—*A. Clarke*. Not by causing it to thunder and rain at Samuel's prayer, but by giving them a king.—*Keil*.

25. Ye shall be consumed—Mark the decree: By disobedience and sin even the Lord's anointed, as well as the chosen people, shall most certainly perish. Surely a most impressive warning with which to close the prophet's last public address to the assembled nation.—*D. Steele*. **Both ye and your king**—If you do wickedly *you* shall be destroyed, your *kingdom* destroyed, and your *king* destroyed. Here they had set before them life and good, death and evil. Never was a people more fully warned, and never did a people profit less by the warning, and they continue to this day monuments of God's justice and forbearance.—*A. Clarke*. With these words of comfort Samuel closed his public life as the sole judge of Israel. But his office did not entirely cease, for, as we have seen, "he judged Israel all the days of his life." In his subsequent relations to Saul, there is clearly more than the sort of authority which the later prophets never ceased to exercise as special messengers of Jehovah, to reprove the sins of the king and direct him on great occasions. Samuel's is a power constantly present to check the

25 But if ye shall still do wickedly, ¹⁵ye shall be consumed, ¹⁶both ye and your king.

¹⁵ Josh. 24, 20. — ¹⁶ Deut. 28, 36.

waywardness of Saul, and at last reversing his election and designating his successor.—*Wm. Smith*.

Authorities to be Consulted.

Kitto's History of the Bible, chap. xvi. Milman's History of the Jews, Book vi. Stanley's Jewish Church, Lecture xxi. Smith's Old Testament History, chap. xx. Kitto's Daily Bible Illustrations, Thirtieth week. Lesson Helps for 1875, 2d Quarter, Lesson XIII, June 27. Bishop Hall's Contemplations, book xii, cont. vi. Guthrie's Sunday Magazine, vol. i, p. 201. Geikie's Hours with the Bible, vol. iii, chap. iv.

Practical Root Thoughts.

[THE FEAR OF THE LORD.]

1. The fear of the Lord should be awakened by a remembrance of his mercies and his care. Ver. 18.
2. The fear of the Lord leads to service and obedience to his words. Ver. 14.
3. The fear of the Lord has its results in growth and prosperity. Ver. 14.
4. The fear of the Lord is essential to the enjoyment of the favor of the Lord. Ver. 15.
5. The fear of the Lord is intensified by his mighty acts, causing awe and reverence. Vers. 16-18.
6. The fear of the Lord causes a deep consciousness of sin and guilt. Ver. 19.
7. The fear of the Lord gives the promise of his favor and his presence. Vers. 21, 22.

B. C. 1079.]

LESSON VI.

[Nov. 11.]

SAUL REJECTED.—1 Sam. 15. 12-26.

GOLDEN TEXT.—Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice.—1 SAM. 15. 22.

TIME.—B. C. 1079.

PLACE.—Gilgal, in the Jordan valley.

CONNECTING LINKS.—(1) Saul's unlawful sacrifice. 1 Sam. 13. 1-15. (2) Jonathan's exploit at Michmash. 1 Sam. 14. 1-46. (3) Saul's victories, and his family. 1 Sam. 14. 47-52. (4) Saul's war with the Amalekites, and disobedience to God's command. 1 Sam. 15. 1-11.

INTRODUCTION.—About the tenth or eleventh year of Saul's reign God made known to the prophet that the iniquity of the Amalekites had now reached its height, and that the time was fully come when the old sentence of utter extermination should be executed. Saul was charged with its execution; and his commission, as delivered to him by Samuel, was expressed in the most absolute terms, and left the king no option to spare aught that breathed. Under this supreme order, the king made a general call upon

all the tribes, which brought together an army of two hundred thousand men, among whom there were but ten thousand men of Judah. The deficiency of that tribe in supplying its due proportion is probably not noticed by the historian on this and on a former occasion without some object, and that object probably was to convey the intimation that since the scepter had been of old promised to that tribe, it was discontented at the government of Saul, and less hearty than the other tribes in its obedience. The king led his army into the territory of Amalek. There he made the most able disposition of his forces, seized the most favorable positions, and then turned his advantages against the enemy. A general action followed, in which the Israelites were victorious, and they pursued the Amalekites to their most distant and last retreats. Agag, the king, was taken alive with all his riches. Blinded by his ambition and his avarice to the danger of acting in defiance of a most positive and public command from God himself, Saul determined to spare the life of Agag, and to preserve the more valuable parts of all the booty from destruction; but, with a most insulting or weak mockery of obedience, "all that was vile and refuse they utterly destroyed."—*J. Kitto.*

12 And when Sam'u-el rose early to meet Saul in the morning, it was told Sam'u-el, saying, Saul came to ¹Car'mel, and, behold, he set him up a place, and is gone about, and passed on, and gone down to Gil'gal.

¹ Josh. 15. 55.—² Gen. 14. 19;

12. Samuel rose early—After a night spent in supplication with God and in sorrow over Saul. Verse 11. To meet Saul—He went to meet Saul on his return from the Amalekite war. Carmel—A city in the mountains of Judah, (Joshua 15. 55), three hours to the south of Hebron, slightly by east. It is now called *Kurnul*, and the names of the neighboring cities, Maon, Ziph, Juttah, Anab, etc., survive also.—*Speaker's Commentary.* Set him up a place—The Hebrew word (*gad*) means a *hand*, but we have a certain clew to the meaning, *monument*, or *trophy*, not only in the verb here used, "set up," but in 2 Sam. 18. 18, where we are told that the marble pillar which Absalom set up in his lifetime was called *Gad Absalom*.—*Speaker's Commentary.* It may have been an elevated hand, serving as an index to attract the attention of the passing traveler.—*D. Steele.* Gone down to Gilgal—Gilgal, on the south-



western bank of the Jordan, was evidently at that time one of the most sacred places in Israel, and the true center of the whole people. Even in earlier ages it possessed a similar importance, which at the time in ques-

tion was no doubt all the greater, because on the west the Philistine power extended so far, in that the center of gravity of the kingdom was necessarily pushed back to the banks of the Jordan. There was the place of assembly for the people on national questions of common interest; and

13 And Sam'u-el came to Saul: and Saul said unto him, ²Blessed be thou of the LORD; ³I have performed the commandment of the LORD.

14 And Sam'u-el said, What *meaneth* then this bleating of the sheep in mine

Judg. 17. 2; Ruth 3. 2.—³ Luke 18. 11.

thence, after solemn sacrifice, did they march forth in arms to battle.—*H. Ewald.*

He had more need to have been repenting of his sin and making his peace with God than boasting of his victory.—*M. Henry.*

13. Blessed be thou of the Lord—A courtesy somewhat overdone, a profession of obedience somewhat prematurely and too ostentatiously made. This very profession of respect and forwardness of profession might of itself have led Samuel to suspect that something was wrong. Men, who before any challenge is made, are so quick and vehement to assert their innocence, go some length thereby to prove their guilt.—*Sunday Magazine.* I have performed—He had actually persuaded himself that, partial though it was, his obedience would be accepted; or, at least, that the shortcoming from the full tale and measure of what had been required would, all things considered, be excused.—*Sunday Magazine.*

Consider Saul's master evil—want of wholehearted surrender and obedience to the will and commandment of God. This it was which ran through, vitiated, and spoiled the whole life and course of the unhappy king, Saul. Point out how, in this respect, the man Saul of the Old Testament stands in remarkable contrast with the man Saul of the New. The New Testament Saul threw his whole heart and soul into whatever he was and undertook, and became a king unto God in the spiritual Israel.—*Watson Smith.*

14. What meaneth then—God had commanded the slaughter of all the Amalekites, and the destruction of their property. There seems

ears, and the lowing of the oxen which I hear?

15 And Saul said, They have brought them from the Am'al-ek-ites: 'for the people spared the best of the sheep and of the oxen, to sacrifice unto the LORD thy God; and the rest we have utterly destroyed.

⁴ Gen. 3. 12;

to be an obvious policy in this command to destroy all plunder, lest the Israelites should have been tempted to make marauding excursions upon their neighbors, and by degrees be trained up as an ambitious and conquering people. This danger the lawgiver clearly foresaw if they should fall under a monarchy.—*H. H. Milman.*

Many boast of their obedience to the command of God; but what mean, then, their indulgence of the flesh, their love of the world, their passion and uncharitableness, and their neglect of holy duties, which witness against them?—*M. Henry.*

15. Brought them from the Amalekites—The Amalekites, a Bedouin tribe, were the first heathen nation to attack the Israelites after their deliverance out of Egypt, which they did in the most treacherous manner on their journey from Egypt to Sinai; and they had been threatened by God with extermination in consequence. This Moses enjoined upon Joshua, and also committed to writing, for the Israelites to observe in all future generations, (Exod. 17. 8-16.)—*Keil.* The people spared—Every word uttered by Saul seems to indicate the breaking down of his moral character. There is something thoroughly mean in his attempt to shift the responsibility of what was done from his own kingly shoulders to those of the people. One feels that, after the scene so forcibly described in this chapter, Saul must have forfeited his own self-respect, and that his downward career was henceforth almost inevitable.—*Speaker's Commentary.* To sacrifice unto the Lord—Even if the cattle spared were really intended as sacrifices to the Lord, not only the people, but Saul also, would have had their own interests in view (vide ver. 9) since the flesh of thank-offerings was appropriated to sacrificial meals.—*Keil.* God appointed these cattle to be sacrificed to him in the field, and therefore will give to those no thanks that bring them to be sacrificed at his altar; for he will be served in his own way, and according to the rule he himself has prescribed. Nor will a good intention justify a bad action.—

16 Then Sam'u-el said unto Saul, Stay, and I will tell thee what the LORD hath said to me this night. And he said unto him, Say on.

17 And Sam'u-el said, When thou wast little in thine own sight, *wast* thou not made the head of the tribes of Is'ra-el, and the LORD anointed thee king over Is'ra-el?

Prov. 28. 13.

M. Henry. Let us mark the way in which he twice speaks of him to whom they were to be offered up—"to the Lord thy God"—as if it would be particularly acceptable to Samuel to know that it was to the Lord his God that such a large and costly offering was to be devoted.—*W. Hanna.* The rest we have . . . destroyed—In the destruction he claims to have had a share. 'We did it. The sparing—the censurable part of the transaction—he throws upon others. They—the people—did it.

Those that are willing to justify themselves, are commonly very forward to condemn others, and to lay the blame upon any rather than take it to themselves.—*M. Henry.* However deep, then, may be the shame of exposure, however heavy the penalty attendant upon acknowledgment of guilt, never let us try to justify a wrong act by a falsehood, however artfully contrived, however near in outward form it may be to the truth, for somehow or other the attempt is almost sure to fail.—*Sunday Magazine.*

16. Then Samuel said—The way in which Samuel now seems thoroughly to acquiesce in the wisdom and justice of the sentence which (verse 11) he had so strenuously resisted at first is very striking. What before was known only to the Searcher of Hearts, had now been displayed to Samuel by Saul himself.—*Speaker's Commentary.* Stay—Saul was going away as if nothing was amiss; or perhaps he was exasperated by Samuel's rebuke; but the prophet detains him, in order that he may hear his condemnation from God.—*C. Wordsworth.* I will tell thee—Leave off these false pretenses, desist from such hypocritical apologies, while, by the revelation of Him whom thou callest my God, I lay open the iniquities of thy heart and the disobedience of thy life.—*D. Steele.* This night—Gilgal was within fifteen miles of Ramah. Samuel might easily have come from Ramah that morning.—*Speaker's Commentary.*

17. Little in thine own sight—As was manifested in his modest response to Samuel's first salutation. Chap. 9. 21.—*D. Steele.* Wast thou not made the head—Samuel brings out in strong prominence the fact that his elevation

18 And the LORD sent thee on a journey, and said, Go and utterly destroy the sinners the Am'al-ek-ites, and fight against them until *they be consumed.

19 Wherefore then didst thou not obey the voice of the LORD, but didst

a They

to the throne was not due to his own ability or influence, but solely to the favor of God; a fact which should induce humility and obedience. One exalted from such a low degree to so high a position by the divine hand should have had but one desire in his heart, and that a desire to know and do the will of his divine benefactor. But, alas! Saul has many successors.—*M. C. Hazard.* The Lord anointed thee king—Then thou wast great in the sight of God; but now thou art great in thine own eyes, and art little in his sight.

Observe the contrast between Saul and Paul. Saul of Gibeah lost an earthly kingdom by pride, but Saul of Tarsus gained a heavenly kingdom by humility. "I am the least of the apostles, that am not meet to be called an apostle." (1 Cor. 15. 10.) The name *Paulus* which he received proclaimed his littleness in his own sight.—*C. Wordsworth.*

18. On a journey—A march, having a commission to accomplish. Go and utterly destroy—Like the inhabitants of Jericho, the Amalekites were "devoted" to destruction. In the case of the former, the law was carried out because of the idolatry of the inhabitants and their incorrigibly corrupt observances. But the Amalekites were devoted for a better reason. In the account given in Exod. 17. 8-16, of the battle of Rephidim, there is no clew given why the anger of the Lord was so stirred up that he should swear eternal war against Amalek until he should be destroyed. In the second verse of our chapter, however, we have a little light thrown on this—"he laid wait for him in the way"—and in Deut. 25. 18 the whole thing is made plain; "He smote the hindmost of thee, even all that were feeble behind thee, when thou wast faint and weary, and he feared not God." To attack his people, when, on account of their hasty exit from Egypt, they were a raw, undisciplined host, almost helpless as against a warlike and war-experienced people, and, in addition to this, to attack them when they were faint and weary, and still more shameful, to lie in wait and smite the hindmost and the feeble, was enough to provoke the fierce and enduring

fly upon the spoil, and didst evil in the sight of the LORD?

20 And Saul said unto Sam'u-el, Yea, I have obeyed the voice of the LORD, and have gone the way which the LORD sent me, and have brought A'gag the king of Am'a-lek,

consume.

anger of the God whose love for his people was so great that he bore them "as a man doth bear his son," in all the way that they went. Deut. 1. 31.—*M. C. Hazard.* The sinners—As though God would justify his commission to destroy them. So it is said of the men of Sodom, that they were "sinners before the Lord." (Gen. 13. 13.)—*Speaker's Commentary.* Until they be consumed—When God the Lord commands such a war of annihilation, then this is no war of human vengeance; still less is it an ambitious war of conquest; but it is a judgment of divine wrath.—*Schlier.*

19. Wherefore . . . didst thou not obey When the Lord expressly says, "Thou shalt," and his rational creature dares to persist in saying, "I will not," whether the contest be about an apple or a kingdom, it is "stubbornness" and "rebellion," a contempt of the commandments of God, and a daring insult to his majesty and authority.—*T. Scott.* Didst fly upon the spoil—It is so easy, while professing to give ourselves to God and his holy and honorable service, to seek and serve ourselves meanwhile, and keep in view low, earthly ends, even to fight against prevalent forms of error and evil more for the sake of our own advancement and advantage than from pure loyalty to the cause of truth and righteousness. We may win the spoils of the enemy, and in so doing, spare Agag the king, take the master-evil home into our own hearts and households, seek our own reputation and interest, and not the glory of God.—*Watson Smith.*

20. Yea, I have obeyed—In Saul's answer he declares that he *has* obeyed God, and cites the very acts reprobat by Samuel, the bringing of the spoil and the sparing of the Amalekite chief, as evidences of his obedience. So sinners can weave their sophistries around disobedience, and make it seem loyalty. Have brought Agag—Bringing Agag he mentioned probably as a practical proof that he had carried out the war of extermination against the Amalekites.—*Keil.* Agag—This was the common title of the Amalekite, as Pharaoh was of the Egyptian, and Abimelech of the Philistine

and have utterly destroyed the Am'al-ek-ites.

21 But the people took of the spoil, sheep and oxen, the chief of the things which should have been utterly destroyed, to sacrifice unto the Lord thy God in Gil'gal.

22 And Sam'u-el said, ^aHath the LORD

^a Psa. 50. 8, 9; Prov. 21. 3; Isa. 1. 11; Jer. 7. 22; Micah 6. 6; Heb. 10. 6.

kings.—*D. Steele.* There is no reason to suppose that Saul spared the king for any other reason than that for which he retained the spoil, namely to make a more splendid show at the sacrificial thanksgiving. Such was the Jewish tradition preserved by Josephus, who expressly says that Agag was saved for his stature and beauty, and such is the general impression left by the description of the celebration of the victory.—*Dean Stanley.*

21. The people took—How prone are sinners to throw their guilt on others, or else to plead for it a religious motive! Saul did both.

—*D. Steele.* Should have been utterly destroyed—Saul admits that in sparing the spoil the people disobeyed God, but pleads that their motive was praiseworthy. If the error had been that of the ignorant people, the king would not have been held solely accountable for it. The fault was Saul's, and its motives were vanity, covetousness, and a spirit of insubordination to Israel's true King. To sacrifice—Even the sparing of the cattle he endeavored to defend as the fulfillment of a religious duty. The people had taken sheep and oxen from the booty, "*as firstlings of the ban,*" to sacrifice to Jehovah. Sacrificing the best of the booty taken in war as an offering of the first-fruits to the Lord was not indeed prescribed in the law, but was a praiseworthy sign of piety, by which all honor was rendered to the Lord as the giver of the victory. He overlooked the fact that what was banned to the Lord could not be offered to him as a burnt-offering, because, being most holy, it belonged to him already, (Lev. 27. 29,) and, according to Deut. 18. 16, was to be put to death, as Samuel had expressly said to Saul. Ver. 3.—*Keil.* Unto the Lord thy God—There is an implied censure of Samuel in this phrase. Saul says that Samuel blames him for what was done in honor of Samuel's God, as if he had more zeal for the glory of God than was felt by Samuel.—*Speaker's Commentary.*

22. And Samuel said—This base paltering with truth, this pretext of piety to excuse will-

as great delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices, as in obeying the voice of the LORD? Behold, ^ato obey is better than sacrifice, and to hearken than the fat of rams.

23 For rebellion is as the sin of ^bwitchcraft, and stubbornness is as iniquity and idolatry. Because thou hast

^a Eccl. 5. 1; Hosea 6. 6; Matt. 5. 24; 9. 13; 12. 7; Mark 12. 33.
—^b Divination; Deut. 18. 10.

ful disobedience, awakened the true prophetic spirit in Samuel's breast, and, rapt beyond himself by the inspiration of the Most High, he poured forth in winged words the eternal truth which lies at the foundation of all religious service, the inferior worth of ceremonial to moral obedience, so far in anticipation of any teaching yet given:

Hath Jehovah pleasure in burnt-offering and sacrifices,

As in obedience to the voice of Jehovah?

Behold, obedience is better than sacrifice,

And to follow as the fat of rams!

For disobedience is the sin of heathenism,

Disbelief is idols and devils;

Because thou hast rejected the word of Jehovah,

He hath rejected thee also as his king.

The translation adopted is that of Ewald, as rendered by Mr. Estlin Carpenter.—*E. Venables.*

Delight in burnt-offerings . . . in obeying—He assumes the truth of what Saul had said.

He assumes that it had been in part at least for sacrificial purposes that the spoil had been set apart. Did that justify the king? A specific command had been issued. Did Saul and the people think that the richest sacrifices they could offer to the Lord would excuse or compensate for disobedience to that command?—*Sunday Magazine.* Obey is better than sacrifice—

For all the sacrifices and ceremonies of religion are to aid and promote obedience, not to be made a substitute for it. Disobedience can never be made a virtue, even though attended by thousands of sacrifices.—*D. Steele.* In sacrifices a man offers only the strange flesh of irrational animals, whereas, in obedience he offers his own will, which is rational or spiritual worship.—*Berleburger Bible.* Than the fat of rams—Than the choicest part of all the sacrifice, to wit, the fat, which was appropriated to God, (Lev. 3. 16;) whereas, the offerer might partake of other parts of it.—*M. Pool.*

23. Rebellion is as . . . witchcraft—Why is rebellion, or disobedience, said to be "as the sin of witchcraft?" Because the essence of

rejected the word of the LORD, he hath also rejected thee from *being* king.

24 And ⁷Saul said unto Sam'u-el, I ⁸have sinned: for I have transgressed the commandment of the LORD, and thy words: because ⁹I feared the people, and obeyed their voice.

⁷ 2 Sam. 12, 13. — ⁸ Exod. 9, 27. — ⁹ Exod. 23, 2;

witchcraft, (or of its modern form, "spiritualism,") is to put some other supernatural power in the place of God. And disobedience is in fact putting self in the place of God. Both equally dethrone God from his place as the ruler of our lives.—*Eugene Stock*. **Stubbornness**—Either willful and presumptuous sin, whereby a man violently breaks loose from God's command, and resists his authority; or, rather, perseverance or contumacy in sin, justifying it, and pleading for it, which was Saul's present crime.—*M. Pool*. **As . . . idolatry**—Against the two crimes of idolatry and witchcraft the severest penalties of the Mosaic law had been denounced. From both those crimes Saul personally shrunk, and showed great zeal throughout his reign in rooting them out of the country, (chap. 28. 8, 9.)—*W. Hanna*. All conscious disobedience is actually idolatry, because it makes self-will, the human I, into a god.—*Keil*. **Rejected thee from being king**—His repeated acts of disobedience had destroyed all hope of finding in Saul a religious and constitutional king, punctual in his conformity to the law of the land, and to the divine commandment.—*H. H. Milman*. Those are unfit and unworthy to rule over men who are not willing that God should rule over them.—*M. Henry*.

24. Saul said . . . I have sinned—But what was Saul's repentance? See six things about it: (1) No sense of guilt, ver. 20. (2) No sorrow till the threat of punishment came, vers. 23, 24. (3) No desire for cleansing from *sin*—only for remission of punishment, verse 25. (4) No willingness to bear the consequences, verse 30. (5) Obstinate self-vindication at the expense of others, verses 15, 21. (6) Anxiety to find excuses, verse 24. True repentance never shows such signs as these.—*Eugene Stock*. It was not true and serious repentance, or the result of genuine sorrow of heart because he had offended God, but was merely repentance of the lips arising from fear of losing the kingdom, and of incurring public disgrace.—*C. v. Lapide*.

25. Pardon my sin—Use thy great interest with God to obtain the pardon of my sin. Or,

25 Now therefore, I pray thee, pardon my sin, and turn again with me, that I may worship the LORD.

26 And Sam'u-el said unto Saul, I will not return with thee: ¹⁰for thou hast rejected the word of the LORD, and the LORD hath rejected thee from being king over Is'ra-el.

Prov. 29, 25; Isa. 51, 12.—¹⁰ Chap. 2, 30.

do thou pardon my sin against thee; for he had sinned not only against God, but against Samuël also, as God's prophet, and therefore needed a pardon both from God and man.—*M. Pool*. How was it that these repeated confessions were unavailing to obtain forgiveness, when David's "I have sinned against the Lord," after a far more heinous offense, obtained the immediate answer, "The Lord hath put away thy sin." Doubtless it was that Saul only shrunk from the punishment of his sin, (25. 30.) David shrunk in abhorrence from the sin itself. "Against thee, thee only, have I sinned, and done this evil in thy sight."—*Speaker's Commentary*. **And turn again with me**—To Gilgal, whence Saul was gone forth to meet Samuel; and Samuel is here said to turn again to Gilgal, not properly, for he had not now been there, but by way of concomitancy, because he accompanied Saul, who was come thence, and returned thither.—*M. Pool*. **That I may worship**—It was only a formal worship which Saul would offer, not that of the heart. He feared the result if there should be an open separation from Samuel, and the loss of his influence in 'behalf of the throne.

26. I will not return with thee—This was no lie, though he afterward returned, because he spoke what he meant; his words and intentions agreed together, though afterward he saw reason to change his intentions. Compare Gen. 2, 3, which may relieve many perplexed consciences, who think themselves obliged to do what they have said they would do, though they see just cause to change their minds.—*M. Pool*. **The Lord hath rejected thee**—It would be wrong to consider this as the sole act or omission for which this rejection was incurred. It was but one of many acts by which he indicated an utter incapability of apprehending his true position, and in consequence manifested dispositions and conduct utterly at variance with the principles of government which the welfare of the state, and, indeed, the very objects of its foundation, made it most essential to maintain. Unless the attempts at absolute independence made by Saul were checked, or visited with some signal mark

of the divine displeasure, the precedents established by the first king were likely to become the rule to future sovereigns. And hence the necessity, now at the beginning, of peculiar strictness, or even of severity, for preventing the establishment of bad rules and precedents for future reigns.—*J. Kitto.*

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7589, 10762, 10771; ver. 23: 1423, 5277; vers. 24-26: 12161. Geikie's Hours with the Bible, vol. 3, chap. 5.

Practical Root Thoughts.

[DISOBEDIENCE TO GOD.]

1. Those who boast of their obedience are apt to be the very ones who disobey God. Ver. 13.
2. Disobedience to God is sure of detection, by its results in outward act. Ver. 14.
3. Those who have disobeyed God vainly seek to excuse their conduct by impugning others, or by a show of reverence for religion. Ver. 15.
4. Disobedience to God is especially hateful when it is ungrateful. Ver. 17.
5. Disobedience of God is a greater crime than neglect of outward forms of service. Ver. 22.
6. Disobedience to God has in it the germ of every sin, since it is disloyalty. Ver. 23.
7. Disobedience to God is sure to meet its penalty in rejection from God. Ver. 23.
8. Disobedience to God blinds the spiritual perceptions of the sinner. Vers. 24-26.

DAVID ANOINTED.—1 Sam. 16. 1-13.

GOLDEN TEXT.—*I have found David my servant; with my holy oil have I anointed him.*—Psa. 89. 20.

TIME.—B. C. 1065.

PLACE.—Bethlehem, in the tribe of Judah.

CONNECTING LINKS.—Though the events of the present lesson took place fourteen years after those of the last, no events are named between them.

INTRODUCTION.—The reason of this anticipation in the appointment of David as king was partly the comfort of Samuel and other good men, against their great fears in case of Saul's death, of which they expected every day to hear; and partly the assurance of David's title, which otherwise would have been very doubtful. For the prevention of which doubts, it was very meet that the same person and prophet who had anointed Saul might now, upon God's rejection of Saul, anoint David to succeed him upon his death; and because Samuel was now not far from his death, and was to die before Saul, it was fit that David's anointing should be hastened and done before its proper time.—*M. Pool. The youth of David.*—The ruddy boy in his shepherd's coat, tending the sheep of his father on the hill-sides in the wilderness of Judah, was already, if not a king, endowed with the kingly gifts, and with those gifts more than kingly, which gave to his royal state in after years its truest splendor and glory. Thus, before he left the sheep-folds he was already known for his skill in minstrelsy; for remarkable courage and aptitude for military enterprise; for his sagacity, or "prudence," in any business entrusted to him; for a noble presence; and for the spiritual graces which always continued to be the brightest jewels in his diadem.—*W. Lee.*

1 And the LORD said unto Sam'u-el, How long wilt thou mourn for Saul, see-

ing I have rejected him from reigning over Is'ra-el? ¹ Fill thine horn with oil,

2 Kings

9. 1

1. The Lord said unto Samuel—The Lord reproves Samuel, who had indeed meant well,

but had not thought rightly; even a Samuel had to subject himself to God's will, and with his

and go, I will send thee to Jes'se the Beth'le-hem-ite: for I ² have provided me a king among his sons.

2 And Sam'u-el said, How can I go?

²Psa. 78, 70; Acts 13. 22.

whole mind and life send himself forward in God's ways.—*Schlier*. How long wilt thou mourn for Saul—Even after sentence had gone forth, "he mourned for Saul," and interceded urgently and perseveringly for him. So far from the act of deposition being his, it is clear that it was most grievous in his eyes, and if it had been left to himself nothing of the kind would have taken place. He liked the *man*; and although compelled to reprove *the king*, he would probably have been willing to have let him run his course, looking forward to the succession of Jonathan as a sufficient remedy for the errors of his father's reign.—*J. Kitto*. He continued to mourn for Saul, not merely from his own personal attachment to the fallen king, but also, or perhaps still more, from anxiety for the welfare of Israel.—*Keil*. Fill thine horn—A different word from the *vial* spoken of at 10. 1.—*Speaker's Commentary*. Horns appear to have been the *ancient* drinking vessels of all nations; and we may suppose that most persons who had to travel much always carried one with them, for the purpose of taking up water from the fountains to quench their thirst.—*A. Clarke*. The hand of Samuel doth not now bear the scepter to rule Israel, but it bears the horn for the anointing of him that must rule.—*Bishop Hall*. I will send thee—This command presupposes an exact acquaintance on Samuel's part with Jesse and his house, and the presence in his family of the conditions necessary for the theocratic kingdom. That the family was a *wealthy* one is certain from ver. 11. That true *godliness* and piety reigned in it appears from Samuel's acquaintance and intercourse with it, and the sacrifice which he held in the house.—*C. F. Erdmann*. To Jesse the Bethlehemite—The father of David, and thus the immediate progenitor of the whole line of the kings of Judah, and ultimately of Christ. He is the only one of his name who appears in the sacred records. Jesse was the son of *Obed*, who again was the fruit of the union of Boaz and the Moabitess Ruth. Nor was Ruth's the only foreign blood that ran in his reins; for his great-grandmother was no less a person than Rahab the Canaanite, of Jericho. Matt. 1. 5. Jesse's genealogy is twice given in full in the Old Testament, namely, Ruth 4. 18-22, and 1 Chron. 2. 5-12. We there see that, long before David

if Saul hear *it*, he will kill me. And the LORD said, Take an heifer ^a with thee, and say, ^sI am come to sacrifice to the LORD.

^aIn thine hand.—^sChap. 20. 29.

had rendered his family illustrious, it belonged to the greatest house of Judah, that of Pharez, through Hezron his eldest son. One of the links in the descent was Nahshon, (N. T. Nason,) chief man of the tribe at the critical time of the Exodus.—*G. Grove*. A king for me—A king *for me*; not one to gratify the people's desires, but *to fulfill all my will*, as is said Acts 13. 22, and to serve my glory. Or, *my king*; the Hebrew phrase, *to me*, or *for me*, being commonly used for the word mine.—*M. Pool*.

Is there not something wonderfully apt in the fact, and was it wholly an accident, that Jesus, *The Bread of Life*, should be born in Bethlehem, *The House of Bread*, and that Bethlehem, having satisfied the hunger of the barren regions roundabout, should also satisfy the spiritual hunger of all starving souls for the ages to come?—*M. C. Hazard*.

2. How can I go—The sacred historian does not conceal from us that Samuel himself was afraid, but relates the fact; here is an evidence of veracity.—*C. Wordsworth*. If Saul hear . . . kill me—The prophet seems to have known that Saul was now given over to the power of an evil spirit, (ver. 14,) and, urged on by Satanic impulse, he might be as quick to imbrue his hands in the blood of his spiritual father as he was at a later period to slay the priests of Nob. Chap. 12. 18.—*D. Steele*. This protest against the plain direction of the voice of God rests naturally on the fact that Saul was still, notwithstanding the divine sentence of rejection, rightful king of Israel, and would regard the designation of another to the office (if it could not be kept concealed from him) as an act of treachery and revolt, even though Samuel should plead the divine command in his justification.—*C. F. Erdmann*. The Lord said—That there was some foundation for Samuel's anxiety, we may infer from the fact that the Lord did not blame him for his fear, but pointed out the way by which he might anoint David without attracting attention.—*Keil*. Say, I am come to sacrifice—At this time, when the ark was separated from the tabernacle, there was *no one* fixed place for sacrifice; and Samuel, though only a Levite, being established as God's prophet, was authorized and commissioned by him to offer sacrifice.—*C. Wordsworth*.

3 And call Jes'se to the ^b sacrifice, and ^aI will show thee what thou shalt do: and thou ^cshalt anoint unto me *him* whom I name unto thee.

4 And Sam'u-el did that which the LORD spake, and came to Beth'le-hem. And the elders of the town ^etrembled at

his ^ecoming, and said, ^fComest thou peaceably?

5 And he said, Peaceably: I am come to sacrifice unto the LORD: sanctify ^gyourself, and come with me to the sacrifice. And he sanctified Jes'se and his sons, and called them to the sacrifice.

6 And it came to pass, when they

^b Or, feast. — ^c Ex. 4. 15. — ^d Ch. 9. 16. — ^e Ch. 21. 1; Acts 24. 25.

^f Meeting. — ^g 1 Kings 2. 13; 2 Kings 9. 22. — ^h Exod. 19. 10.

Saul resembled the Jewish nation, which ought to have aquired in God's unction of Christ, whose kingdom—like David's—came “not with observation,” and they ought to have rejoiced in it; and those among the Jews were blessed who did so. But the nation was envious of Christ, as Saul was of David, and rejected God's merciful overtures of grace in Christ.—*C. Wordsworth.*

3. Call Jesse to the sacrifice.—*Three directions* are to be distinguished: (1) Samuel is to invite Jesse to the *sacrificial meal*, it is a slain-offering that is spoken of with which was connected a feast; he is to be associated with Jesse in the feast in the narrower circle of the family. (2) Samuel is to await *direction from above*, “I will tell thee what thou shalt do.” This exhibits the specifically divine factor (of which Samuel is to be organ) in the choice of the new king of Israel. (3) He is to *anoint* as king him whom God shall name.—*C. F. Erdmann.* It was not the purpose of God that Samuel should stir up a civil war by setting up David as Saul's rival. *Secrecy*, therefore, was a necessary part of the transaction. But *secrecy* and *concealment* are not the same as *duplicity* and *falsehood*. Concealment of a good purpose, for a good purpose, is clearly justifiable, *e. g.*, in war, in medical treatment, in state policy, and in the ordinary affairs of life. In the providential government of the world, and in God's dealings with individuals, concealment of his purpose till the proper time for its development is the rule rather than the exception, and must be so. There is, therefore, nothing in the least inconsistent with truth in the occurrence here related.—*Speaker's Commentary.*

4. Samuel did.—The troubled condition of soul which could not accept God's thoughts and ways disappeared before the strict *obedience* of the will, which bowed before the Lord's will.—*C. F. Erdmann.* **Came to Bethlehem**—From his home at Ramah, ten miles to the north. **Bethlehem**—See note, Third Quarter, Lesson III, ver. 4. **Elders of the town**—See note, Lesson III, ver. 4. **Trembled at his coming**—There was evidently something unusual in

Samuel's coming to Bethlehem, and the elders, knowing that Samuel was no longer at friendship with Saul, foreboded some evil.—*Speaker's Commentary.* **Comest thou peaceably**—The anxious inquiry of the elders presupposes that even in the time of Saul the prophet Samuel was frequently in the habit of coming unexpectedly to one place and another, for the purpose of reproof and punishing wrong-doing and sin.—*Keil.*

5. **I am come to sacrifice**—It is evident from this that the prophet was accustomed to turn his visits to account by offering sacrifice, and so building up the people in fellowship with the Lord. The reason why sacrifices were offered at different places was, that since the removal of the ark from the tabernacle, this sanctuary had ceased to be the only place of the nation's worship.—*Keil.* **Sanctify yourselves**—See note, Third Quarter, Lesson II, verse 5. —Change your clothes, and wash your bodies in pure water, and prepare your minds by meditation, reflection, and prayer, that, being in the spirit of sacrifice, ye may offer acceptably to the Lord.—*A. Clarke.* **Probably the sacrifice was not till the next day. And he sanctified Jesse**—That is, took care that they should be sanctified.—*Speaker's Commentary.* **Jesse and his sons**—For these particularly the sacrifice was intended, and it is probable, from the acts and words of Samuel on this occasion, that he privately informed Jesse of his object to anoint one of his sons, but it nowhere appears that Jesse was informed of David's royal destiny. Though the prophet may have told him of his purpose to anoint one of his sons, he did not acquaint him with the object of that anointing, but left it for the developments of providence to show.—*D. Steele.*

6. **He looked on Eliab**—The eldest son of Jesse. Like many of the relatives of David, he seems to have been a young man of

were come, that he looked ⁹ on E-li'ab, and ¹⁰ said, Surely the LORD's anointed is before him.

7 But the LORD said unto Sam'u-el, Look not on ¹¹ his countenance, or on the height of his stature; because I have refused him: for ¹² the LORD seeth not as man seeth; for man ¹³ looketh on the ^d outward appearance, but the LORD looketh on ¹⁴ the heart.

8 Then Jes'se called A-bin'a-dab, and made him pass before Sam'u-el. And

he said, Neither hath the LORD chosen this.

9 Then Jes'se made Sham'mah to pass by. And he said, Neither hath the LORD chosen this.

10 Again, Jes'se made seven of his sons to pass before Sam'u-el. And Sam'u-el said unto Jes'se, The LORD hath not chosen these.

11 And Sam'u-el said unto Jes'se, Are here all *thy* children? And he said, ¹⁵ There remaineth yet the youngest, and,

⁹ Called Elihu; 1 Chron. 27. 18.—¹⁰ 1 Kings 12. 26.—¹¹ Psa. 147. 10.—¹² Isa. 65. 8.—¹³ 2 Cor. 10. 7.

^d Eyes.—¹⁴ 1 Kings 8. 39; 1 Chron. 28. 9; Psa. 7. 9; Jer. 11. 20; 17. 10; 20. 12; Acts 1. 24.—¹⁵ Chap. 17. 12.

noble appearance and personal beauty. **The Lord said**—The voice of God inwardly teaches Samuel two things; (1) In respect of Eliab's person, he is not to infer from his imposing exterior that he was the chosen of the Lord. With this humbling correction, which connects itself with verses 1 and 2, he is taught (2) a general truth respecting the difference between divine and human modes of thought and judgment. *Not what man sees*, to which we must supply the words "sees the Lord."—*C. F. Erdmann*. **Look not on . . . the height of his stature**—This seems to be a plain allusion to the external appearance of Saul. Chap. 9. 2. That which chiefly recommended him to the favor of Israel was his size and beauty.—*D. Steele*. This time a king was to be chosen, not for his inches, nor for his beauty. Before, the Lord had chosen a king to please the people; now he proposed to choose one to please himself. Outward appearance, for once, was to have nothing to do with the selection of a king. He was not merely to be royal in seeming, but actually royal, a man after God's own heart.—*M. C. Hazard*. **The Lord looketh on the heart**—Not according to the agreeable appearance which commends itself to the eyes, but according to the moral worth hidden in the depths of the heart, according to the disposition of soul that pleases him, does the Lord judge, who proveth the heart and the reins.—*C. F. Erdmann*.

Let us reckon that to be true beauty which is within, and judge of men, as far as we are capable, by their minds, not their mien.—*M. Henry*.

8, 9. **Abinadab**—Jesse's second son, of whom nothing is known except that he probably followed Saul to the battle in the valley of Elah. Chap. 16. 8. **He said**—Samuel may have spoken aloud to Jesse, or have thought it, as speaking to himself. **Shammah**—Mentioned

also n chap. 17. 13. The name is written Shimmeah, (2 Sam. 13. 3,) and Shimma, (1 Chron. 2. 18; 20. 7.) The proper orthography is probably that in 2 Sam. 13. 3. He was the third son of Jesse, and father of Jonadab "a very subtle man," Amnon's friend, (2 Sam. 13. 3,) and of Jonathan, who slew a giant of Gath. 1 Chron. 20. 6, 7.—*Speaker's Commentary*.

10. **Seven**—That is, including the three who had already passed. Compare a similar mode of expression, Judges 14. 17. It appears from this, and from 17. 12, that Jesse had eight sons; but in 1 Chron. 2. 13-15, only seven are ascribed to him.—*Speaker's Commentary*. **Samuel said to Jesse**—That address to Jesse is merely a negative declaration that the divine selection, with which Samuel was concerned, and which, in the absence of express intimation of its nature, might refer to the prophetic office, rested on none of these seven sons. Samuel's word was, by reason of its indefiniteness, a riddle, whose solution Jesse was to attain only from the following development of the history of his youngest son.—*C. F. Erdmann*.

11. **There remaineth yet the youngest**—According to the chronology generally given, this was not more than ten years before David became king of Judah, at the age of thirty years. 2 Sam. 5. 4. Hence he must have been twenty years old, and twenty-two years old at his encounter with Goliath. There is some reason, however, to suppose that the events should be dated several years earlier, (for the Scripture gives no figures,) and that David was sixteen years old at the time of his anointing. **He keepeth the sheep**—Either therefore he did not thoroughly understand David's great wisdom and valor, or he judged him unfit, by reason of his mean education. And God so ordered it by his providence that David's choice might plainly appear to be God's work, and not Sam-

behold, he keepeth the sheep. And Sam'u-el said unto Jesse, ¹⁶ Send and fetch him: for we will not sit ^{*} down till he come hither.

12 And he sent and brought him in. Now he *was* ¹⁷ ruddy, and withal [†] of a beautiful countenance, and goodly to look to. ¹⁸ And the LORD

said, Arise, anoint him: for this *is* he.

13 Then Sam'u-el took the horn of oil, and anointed ¹⁹ him in the midst of his brethren: and ²⁰ the Spirit of the LORD came upon Da'vid from that day forward. So Sam'u-el rose up, and went to Ra'mah.

¹⁶ 2 Samuel 7. 8; Psalm 78. 70. — ^e Round. — ¹⁷ Song 5. 10. — ^f Fair of eyes.

¹⁸ Chap. 9. 17. — ¹⁹ Psa. 89. 20. — ²⁰ Num. 27. 18; Judg. 11. 29. ^f 13. 25; 14. 6.

uel's or Jesse's design.—*M. Pool*. His brothers were older than himself, and between them and him little familiarity existed. His associates were the sons of Abigail and Zeruiah, his half sisters. His first employment was the feeding of his father's flocks. This simple pastoral life gave him physical vigor and promoted his soul-growth; but this was not always a quiet life. In defense of his sheep he had occasional conflicts with wild beasts, and sometimes, perhaps, with neighboring Philistine marauders. In these encounters he showed such prowess that his fame reached the court of the reigning king.—*C. F. Deems*. **We will not sit down**—"We will not surround," namely, the table; we will not sit around it to eat till he come.—*C. F. Erdmann*.

There is no comfortable participation in any sacrifice without the presence of the true David. We cannot sit down till He come.—*C. Wordsworth*.

12. **Ruddy**—*Red*; it may refer either to the face or the hair, but as it is used of the hair in Gen. 25. 25, we prefer so to understand it here and in chap. 17. 42. These three are the only passages where the word occurs. Esau and David were alike in being *red-haired*, as well as in their wandering habits and skillful use of weapons. It is said that red hair was regarded as a rare mark of beauty in the East.—*D. Steele*. **Of a beautiful countenance**—Rather, *beautiful as to the eyes*. This indicates that his eyes were keen and penetrating, enlivened by the fires of genius, and beaming with a generous warmth, by which the hearts of men and women were alike affected.—*D. Steele*. **The Lord said**—By a special moving of the Spirit upon the mind of Samuel.

13. **Samuel anointed him**—In all probability Samuel said nothing at the time, since, according to verse 2, he had good reason for keeping the matter secret, not only on his own account, but still more for David's sake; so that even the brethren of David who may have been present knew nothing about the meaning and

object of the anointing, but may have imagined that Samuel merely intended to consecrate David as a pupil of the prophet.—*Keil*. It does not appear that Samuel informed David of his destiny, as he did Saul; but the special movings of the Spirit on his heart, and the successive developments of Providence in his favor, must have gradually convinced him that he was sooner or later to be recognized as the Lord's anointed. At a later time this seems to have been openly revealed.—*D. Steele*. **In the midst of his brethren**—Sure of his course, Samuel (verse 13) performs the ceremony of anointing David (the object and meaning of the act being still an enigma to Jesse and his other sons) *in the midst of his brethren or from among* [Germ. *unter*] his brethren; the Heb. preposition may mean either. Thenius adopts the latter, on the ground that the brothers had gone away, but this is not required by the narrative.—*C. F. Erdmann*. **The Spirit of the Lord came**—A spirit of prudence to behave himself wisely upon all occasions, with a spirit of courage, so that he durst grapple with a lion and a bear; and the spirit of prophecy, in which he was afterward very eminent. In short, a spirit fit for a prince.—*Patrick*. **From that day forward**—The words "from that day forward" denote the continuity of the impartation of the Spirit to David's inner life, and indicates its unbroken development under the guidance of the divine Spirit to full fitness and capacity for the royal calling.—*C. F. Erdmann*. Though Saul seemed to retain his power, in reality it passed away from him with the departure of the Spirit of the Lord. No one can read the history of the Israelites from this period on without seeing that David, and not Saul, rides at their head. When God sent Samuel to anoint David it was no empty ceremony. From that time on he was king in fact, Saul king but in name. It is David that rescues Israel from the fear of Goliath, and that ever afterward saves his people. In that act of anointing, the unseen hands of Jehovah had placed in his the reins of power, and left Saul's empty of strength.—*M. C. Hazard*.

Samuel . . . went to Ramah—That David was in constant communication with him (and perhaps with the prophetic school there) is quite certain from the following history. Compare 19. 20, *sq.* In this intercourse with the prophet of the Lord he learned the meaning of Samuel's enigmatical act, and under the progressive occupation and enlightenment of his inner life by the Spirit from above, received the knowledge of the duties of his royal calling and the preparation to fulfill them. For the present his election and anointing to be king of Israel remained a divine secret.—*C. F. Erdmann.*

Latest born of Jesse's race,
Wonder lights thy bashful face,
While the prophet's gifted oil
Seals thee for a path of toil.
We thy angels, circling round thee,
Ne'er shall find thee as we found thee,
When thy faith first brought us near
In thy lion-fight severe.

Go! and mind thy flocks awhile,
At thy doom of greatness smile;
Bold to bear God's heaviest load,
Dimly guessing of the road—
Rocky road, and scarce ascended,
Though thy foot be angel-tended;
Double praise thou shalt attain
In royal court and battle plain.

—*John H. Newman.*

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Practical Root Thoughts.

[THE CHOICE OF THE LORD.]

1. God chooses men for every emergency, and when one instrument fails, he has another in readiness. Ver. 1.
2. God's choice may be for a time concealed from his enemies, until the hour arrives for its revelation. Vers. 2, 3.
3. God's choice is made among those who have cleansed themselves of sin, and fitted themselves for his service. Ver. 5.
4. God's choice is not according to the outward appearance of men, as his plans are not according to human conceptions. Ver. 7.
5. God chooses and honors men according to the character and the heart, which he alone can discern. Ver. 7.
6. God sometimes chooses for the highest honor the one lightly esteemed among men. Ver. 11.
7. God's choice is ever attended with his endowment for work. Ver. 13.

B. C. 1063.]

LESSON VIII.

[Nov. 25.]

DAVID AND GOLIATH.—1 Sam. 17. 38-51.

GOLDEN TEXT.—The battle is the Lord's.—1 SAM. 14. 47.

TIME.—B. C. 1063.

PLACE.—The valley of Elah, in the tribe of Judah.

CONNECTING LINKS.—(1) Saul troubled by an evil spirit. 1 Sam. 16. 14. (2) David brought before Saul. 1 Sam. 16. 15-23. (3) David's return to his home. 1 Sam. 17. 15. [Some think that the above events took place *after* the following, and not in the order given in 1 Sam.] (4) The challenge of Goliath. 1 Sam. 17. 1-19. (5) David's offer to fight with the giant. 1 Sam. 17. 20-37.

INTRODUCTION.—The scene of the battle which the young shepherd "came to see" was in a ravine in the frontier-hills of Judah, called probably from this or similar encounters Ephesdammin, "the bound of blood." Saul's army is encamped on one side of the ravine, the Philistines on the other. A dry watercourse marked by a spreading terebinth runs between them. A Philistine of gigantic stature insults the whole Israelite army. He is clothed in the complete armor for which his nation was renowned, which is described piece by piece, as if to enhance its awful strength, in contrast with the de-

fenselessness of the Israelites. No one can be found to take up the challenge. The king sits in his tent in moody despair. Jonathan, it seems, is absent. At this juncture David appears in the camp, sent by his father with ten loaves and ten slices of milk-cheese fresh from the sheepfolds, to his three eldest brothers, who were there to represent their father detained by his extreme age. Just as he comes to the circle of wagons, which formed, as in Arab settlements, a rude fortification round the Israelite camp, he hears the well-known shout of the Israelite war-cry. "The shout of a king is among them." The martial spirit of the boy is stirred at the sound; he leaves his provisions with the baggage-master, and darts to join his brothers (like one of the royal messengers) into the midst of the lines. There he hears the challenge, now made for the fortieth time, sees the dismay of his countrymen, hears the reward proposed by the king, goes with the impetuosity of youth from soldier to soldier talking of the event, in spite of his brothers' rebuke, he is introduced to Saul, he undertakes the combat.—*Dean Stanley*. Taking into account the change wrought in his appearance by the lapse of two or three years, and by the growth of his beard, as well as from his appearing in the guise of a shepherd with the usual implements connected with that employment, it does not seem to us very surprising that the king did not know him again; besides, it is likely that Saul's memory had been somewhat impaired by his disease, while the constant variety and change of persons presented to the notice of a king would tend to reduce any slight recollection he might have entertained to a vague and dim impression that he had at some former period seen some person of whom this young man reminded him.—*J. Kitto*.

38 And Saul ^aarmed Da'vid with his armor, and he put an helmet of brass upon his head; also he armed him with a coat of mail.

39 And Da'vid girded his sword upon

a Clothed David

38. Saul armed David with his armor—Not that which he wore himself—the disproportion of his stature would not admit that—but some that he kept in his armory; little thinking that he on whom he now put his helmet and coat of mail must shortly inherit his crown and robe.—*M. Henry*. Dean Stanley, however, thinks that it was Saul's own armor that was placed upon David. **Helmet of brass**—See different forms of ancient helmets in the annexed



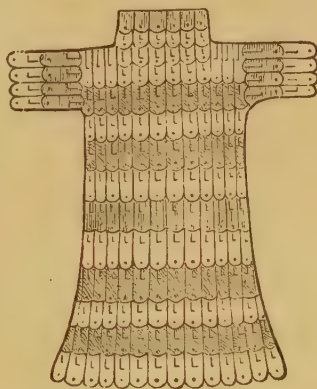
Ancient Helmets.

Illustration. **A coat of mail**—Literally, *A coat of scales*. A defensive armor for the body, consisting of plates of brass overlapping each other like the scales on a fish, or shingles on a roof. The Hebrew word is rendered *habergeon* in 2 Chron. 26. 14, and Neh. 4. 16.—*D. Steele*.

his armor, and he assayed to go; for he had not proved *it*. And David said unto Saul, I cannot go with these; for I have not proved *them*. And Da'vid put them off him.

with his clothes.

39. David girded his sword—Not his own sword, but that of Saul, which was doubtless



† Egyptian Coat of Mail.

large and heavy, befitting one who towered "from his shoulders above the people." **Assayed**—Undertook; went forth from Saul's tent. **Had not proved**—The word *them* should stand in place of *it*. He had never before worn such armor and weapons, felt them to be an incumbrance, and wisely did not venture to the combat in them. **David put them off**—We may suppose Saul's armor to be very fine and very firm; but what good would it do David, if

40 And he took his staff in his hand, and chose him five smooth stones out of the ^bbrook, and put them in a shepherd's ^cbag which he had, even

^b Or, valley.

it were not fit, or if he knew not how to manage himself in it? Those that aim at things above their education and usage, and covet the attire and armor of princes, forget that that is the best for us, which we are fit for and accustomed to.—*M. Henry.*

The Jewish nation, like Saul, relied on the weapons of this world; but Jesus Christ, the true David, in his conflict with the spiritual Goliath, and in the preaching of his Gospel, did not resort to the armor of this world's wisdom, power, and wealth; but chose those things which are despised of men, and overcame Satan with the word of God, and by the ministry of things and persons despised as weak and foolish by the world, especially by the doctrine of the cross, preached by publicans and fishermen. 1 Cor. 1. 27; 2 Cor. 4. 7; 10. 4.—*C. Wordsworth.*

40. Took his staff—Perhaps his shepherd's staff; though the same word is used for any kind of a walking-stick. Smooth stones—Because such stones would go most freely out of the sling; and consequently, with more force and certainty, directly to the mark which he aimed at.—*M. Pool.* Out of the brook—The stream which ran through the valley which separated the Philistines from the Israelites, and which was very likely dry at this time.—*Speaker's Commentary.* In a scrip—The scrip was a bag of leather thrown over the shoulder, and used by shep-



Egyptian Slingers and Sling.

herds and travelers to carry provisions. It is still used by Eastern shepherds, and is made of the skin of a kid stripped off whole and tanned. This is the only passage in the Old Testament where it is mentioned, but reference is made to

in a script; and his sling *was* in his hand; and he drew near to the Philistine.

41 And the Philistine came on and

^c Vessel.

it in several places in the New Testament. Matt. 10. 10; Mark 6. 8; Luke 9. 3; 10. 4; 22. 35, 36.

—*J. M. Freeman.* His sling was in his hand

—David was evidently an expert marksman; and his sling gave him greatly the advantage over Goliath; an advantage of which the giant does not seem to have been aware. He could hit him within any speaking distance; if he missed once, he had as many chances as he had stones; and after all, being unincumbered with armor, young, and athletic, he could have saved his life by flight. Against him the Philistine could do but little, except in close fight; it is true he appears to have had a javelin or missile spear, but David took care to prevent the use of all such weapons by giving him the first blow.—*A. Clarke.* Drew near to the Philistine—It has been conjectured that he was one of the giant race of the Rephaim, some of whom took refuge from the Ammonites with the Philistines. Deut. 2. 20, 21; 2 Sam. 21. 22. His height is variously stated: in the Hebrew text, six cubits and a span, (or 11 feet 4½ inches, taking the cubit at 21 inches;) by the LXX and Josephus, four cubits and a span, (7 feet 10½ inches.) There is also some confusion about his name: as Elhanan is said to have slain a Goliath of Gath, whose description is like that of the text, (2 Sam. 21. 19;) but the parallel passage in 1 Chron. 20. 5, gives "Lahmi, the brother of Goliath the Gittite." From these two passages we may infer that a certain giant of Gath, whose name, Rapha, seems to connect him with the Rephaim, had five sons—Goliath, Ishbi-benob, Saph, Lahmi, and a fifth, who is not named, but distinguished as having six fingers and toes on each hand and foot.—*Wm. Smith.*

Saul's own tribe of Benjamin was famous for its left-handed slingers, who could cast stones at a hair and not miss. Slings were also used in war by both the Egyptians and the Assyrians. Among the latter, the sling consisted of a double rope with a thong, probably of leather, to receive the stone; it was swung round the head. The slinger held a second stone in his left hand, and at his feet is frequently seen, in the sculptures, a heap of stones ready for use.—*J. Kitto.* He who put it into his hand to fight the Philistine, put it into his head with what weapons to do it.—*M. Henry.*

41. The Philistine came on—Goliath, whose heart was high as his head; his strength

drew near unto Da'vid; and the man that bare the shield *went* before him.

42 And when the Phi-lis'tine looked about, and saw Da'vid, he ¹disdained him; for he was *but* a youth, and ²ruddy, and of a fair countenance.

¹ Psa. 123. 4, 5; 1 Cor. 1. 27, 28.—² Chap. 16. 12.

was answerable to his stature; his weapons answerable to his strength; his pride exceeded all.—*Bishop Hall.* **Man that bare the shield . . . before**—In the Assyrian sculptures there are representations of warriors fighting in this manner, with men before them holding the large



Assyrian Large Shields.

shields with the bottom resting on the ground, thus forming movable breastworks. The great shields of the Philistines seem to have been of circular shape.—*J. M. Freeman.*

42. **Looked about**—As if he did not see his diminutive antagonist until he had looked around. **Disdained**—Deeming it an insult that he should be called upon to fight with such an enemy. **A youth**—Too young, apparently, for a soldier, much more for a single combat with a giant who has been “a man of war from his youth.” **Of a fair countenance**—Not having so much as the countenance of a martial person.—*M. Pool.*

Here are two men, the one the personification of power, the other of weakness; the one of self-reliance, the other of confidence in God. We see man, nothing but man, in the one; God, nothing but God, in the other. In the Philistine we see man fighting against God, in David man fighting for God. What the world admires and prizes is to be found in the one; what it despises in the other.—*H. Bonar.*

43 And the Phi-lis'tine said unto Da'vid, *Am* ¹I a dog that thou comest to me with staves? And the Phi-lis'tine cursed Da'vid by his gods.

44 And the Phi-lis'tine ¹said to Da'vid, Come to me, and I will give thy

³ Chap. 24. 14; 2 Sam. 3. 8.—⁴ 1 Kings 20. 10, 11.

The shield that covers me is faith, my sword is the strength of God in which I have put all my confidence; my spear is the entire freedom from all selfhood, so that I seek no other interest than that of God. In such equipment, namely, in entire self-devotion, as I do not trouble myself about the result, I venture all I am and have.—*Berleburger Bible.*

43. **Comest . . . with staves**—It is probable that David had a staff in one hand, and that, not discerning the sling in his other hand, Goliath conceived that *this* was the intended weapon of conflict. Mrs. Postans states that “the shepherds of the East always carry a staff which they hold in the center, the object of its use not being as a support, but to beat bushes and low brushwood into which flocks stray, and where snakes and other reptiles abound.”—*Journal of Sacred Literature*, iv, 51. **Cursed David by his gods**—Here is shown the innermost contrast which comes into play in the battle between Israelites and Philistines; the contrast between the living God and his people on the one hand, and the idolatrous, antitheocratic world on the other.—*C. F. Erdmann.*

44, 45. **I will give thy flesh**—In the single combats of the East, even in those preceding and bringing on general actions, the opposed champions are still wont thus to kindle each other's wrath by mutual abuse, and the reader of Homer will recollect many examples of the same practice.—*J. Kitto.* **With a sword**—The sword was one of the earliest weapons in



Egyptian Swords.

use. The Egyptian sword was short and straight, two and a half to three feet long, and double edged. The handle was plain and hollowed in the center, the better to afford a firm grasp. The Hebrew sword probably resembled it.—*J. M. Freeman.* **A shield**—Hebrew, a javelin, as verse 6.—*Speaker's Commentary.* Thus Goliath carried two spears, a long, heavy

flesh unto the fowls of the air, and to the beasts of the field.

45 Then said Da'vid to the Phi-lis'tine, Thou comest to me with a sword, and with a spear, and with a shield; *but I come to thee in the name of the LORD of hosts, the God of the armies of Is'ra-el, whom thou hast defied.

46 This day will the LORD ^ddeliver thee into mine hand; and I will smite thee, and take thine head from thee; and I will give the ^ecarcasses of the host of the Phi-lis'tines this day unto the fowls of the air, and to the wild-beasts of the earth; ^fthat all the earth may know that there is a God in Is'ra-el.

⁵ 2 Sam. 22. 33, 35; ⁶ Psa. 124. 8; 125. 1; ⁷ 2 Cor. 10. 4; ⁸ Heb. 11. 33, 34, 18. 36; ⁹ 2 Kings 19. 19; ¹⁰ Isa. 52. 10.—¹¹ Psa. 44. 6, 7; ¹² Hosea 1. 7;

one on his shoulder, and a short javelin in his hand; one to be hurled the other used as a lance. In the name of the Lord—The name of the Lord is for David the totality of all the revelations by which the living God has made himself known and named among his people. Of these elements, which form the conception of the name of God, he here, suitably to the situation, adduces those which characterize him in respect to his warlike and ruling power as captain and conqueror of his people. Psa. 24. 10.—*C. F. Erdmann.* This the two-fold greatness of David and his whole age already steps into the foreground, the courage that is bold without rashness, which is inspired by the newly awakened energy of the higher religion.—*H. Ewald.*

46. This day will the Lord deliver thee—This was no mere boast of David's, lii Goliath's words in verse 44, but a prophetic utterance under the influence of "the Spirit of the Lord." Chap. 16. 13.—*Speaker's Commentary.* David expresses his certainty of victory, but at the same time affirms that it will be God's deed. Triumphant, heroic courage before victory and humble bowing before God as the bestower of victory, are here united in David.—*C. F. Erdmann.* All the earth may know—By the help which God the Lord will grant his people in this victory, all the world will know that *Is'ra-el has a God*, not "that God is for Israel." The sense is: The other nations will learn that God does not suffer himself to be mocked in his people, but as their covenant-God helpfully and mightily espouses their cause.—*C. F. Erdmann.*

Every man in the army believed God could deliver by one man, but one only believed he would.—*D. L. Moody.*

47 And all this assembly shall know that the LORD ^asaveth not with sword and spear: for ^bthe battle is the LORD's, and he will give you into our hands.

48 And it came to pass, when the Phi-lis'tine arose, and came and drew nigh to meet Da'vid, that Da'vid hasted, and ran toward the army to meet the Phi-lis'tine.

49 And Da'vid put his hand in his bag, and took thence a stone, and slang it, and smote the Phi-lis'tine in his forehead, that the stone ^csunk into his forehead; and he fell upon his face to the earth.

—^d Shalt thee up.—^e Dent. 28. 26.—^f Josh. 4. 24; 1 Kings 8. 43; Zech. 4. 6.—^g 2 Chron. 20. 15.—^h Sunk as a stone in the water.

47. This assembly shall know—David addresses himself to this combat rather as a priest that was going to offer a sacrifice to the justice of God, than as a soldier that was going to engage an enemy of his country.—*M. Henry.*

We want to be reminded as much in the age of all mechanical inventions and triumphs, as in the age of greatest barbarism, that the shield and the helmet, and the greaves of brass, do not constitute strength; that the sling and the stone in the hand of one who believes in invisible power, are ever the symbols and pledges of victory. If to disbelieve this is to cast off Hebrew old clothes it is also to put on the most vulgar worn-out garments of tyranny and superstition; it is to fall down and worship brute force, to declare that to be the Lord.—*F. D. Maurice.*

48, 49. The Philistine drew nigh—It may be supposed that Goliath, confident of victory, advanced against the despised shepherd lad with uncovered forehead.—*C. F. Erdmann.* David ran—Showing eagerness for the combat. Toward the army—That is, the Philistine army. Took thence a stone—He watched his opportunity, when near enough to have a fair mark in the Philistine, yet not near enough to be a mark for the Philistine's javelin, against which he had no armor. Smote . . . his forehead—The narrative does not explain how his forehead came to be exposed; whether his helmet was off at the time, or whether the stone pierced the helmet, or whether it went in at some point which the helmet did not cover. Either of these ways is conceivable.—*Speaker's Commentary.* The vast forehead was a fair mark; but how easily might the sling have missed it if there had not been another hand in this cast besides David's!—*Bishop Hall.* He fell—Not killed at once, but stunned, and made helpless by the blow.

50 So ¹⁰ Da'vid prevailed over the Phi-lis'tine with a sling and with a stone, and smote the Phi-lis'tine, and slew him; but *there was* no sword in the hand of Da'vid.

51 Therefore Da'vid ran, and stood

¹⁰ Chap. 21. 9; Judg. 3. 81; 15. 15;

All pride comes forth with boldness of forehead; and therefore the wound was on the forehead, the seat of impious effrontery.—*C. Wordsworth*. See how frail and uncertain life is, even then when it thinks itself best fortified, and how quickly, how easily, and with how small a matter, the passage may be opened for life to go out and death to enter.—*M. Henry*.

50. No sword in the hand of David.—The added statement, "David had no sword in his hand," is at the same time the reason for the following statement, namely, the slaying of the giant with his own sword, with which David cut off his head.—*C. F. Erdmann*.

What needed David load himself with an unnecessary weapon! one sword can serve both Goliath and him. If Goliath had a man to bear his shield, David had Goliath to bear his sword where-with that proud, blasphemous head is severed from his shoulders. Nothing more honors God than the turning of wicked men's forces against themselves.—*Bishop Hall*.

51. David ran — Showing alertness, and promptness to take advantage of his opportunity. Took his sword—Goliath's sword is meant. Cut off his head—As David had predicted, (verse 46,) when as yet he had no sword in his possession.—*Speaker's Commentary*. Slew him—The stone threw him down to the earth, and bereaved him of the use of his sense and motion; but there remained some life in him, (as frequently doth in such cases,) which the sword took away, and so completed the work.—*M. Pool*. They fled—Overwhelmed with sudden and uncontrollable terror. The Israelites pursued them even to the gates of Gath.

Take David in this chapter as a type of Christ. Goliath is Satan. No man can overcome him. Jesus came down on to the battle-field of earth to fight him, not for himself, but for his people. But he was "despised and rejected of men." In Mark 6. 2, 3, ("Is not this the carpenter?" etc.) we have the echo of Eliab's taunts. Yet he conquered; and as David cut off Goliath's head with Goliath's own sword, so Jesus by death destroyed "him that had the power of death, that is, the Devil." Heb. 11, 14.—*Eugene Stock*. Each of us

upon the Phi-lis'tine, and took his sword, and drew it out of the sheath thereof, and slew him, and cut off his head therewith. And when the Phi-lis'tines saw their champion was dead, "they fled."

chap. 23. 21. —¹¹ Heb. 11. 34.

has his own giant to fight, and with only God to help and make victory certain. It may be pride, or bad temper, or covetousness, or indolence, or appetite, or some other sin.—*D. A. Whedon*.

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Practical Root Thoughts.

[THE REQUISITES FOR SPIRITUAL VICTORY.]

1. He who would win victories must be familiar with his weapons, and have practice in their use. Ver. 38-40.
2. He who would win victories must equip himself for his warfare according to his needs. Ver. 40.
3. He who would win victories must not under-rate nor despise his antagonist, however feeble he may seem. Ver. 42-44.
4. He who would win victories must show reverence for the God of battles, and fight in his cause. Ver. 45, 46.
5. He who would win victories must trust in the Lord in whose name he goes forth. Ver. 46, 47.
6. He who would win victories needs promptness and energy in his warfare. Ver. 48.
7. He who would win victories must have a definite aim and possess the tact and skill to choose it. Ver. 49.
8. He who would win victories must have courage to pursue his opportunity as well as wisdom to know it. Ver. 51.

B. C. 1063.]

LESSON IX.

[Dec. 2.]

DAVID'S ENEMY, SAUL.—1 Sam. 18. 1-16.

GOLDEN TEXT.—And David behaved himself wisely in all his ways, and the Lord was with him.—1 SAM. 18. 14.

TIME.—B. C. 1063, immediately following the last lesson.

PLACE.—Gibeah, in the tribe of Benjamin, Saul's home.

INTRODUCTION.—The victory over Goliath had been a turning-point of David's career. The Philistines henceforth regarded him as "the king of the land" when they heard the triumphant songs of the Israelitish women, which announced by the vehemence of the antistrophic response that in him Israel had now found a deliverer mightier even than Saul. And in those songs, and in the fame which David thus acquired, was laid the foundation of that unhappy jealousy of Saul toward him which, mingling with the king's constitutional malady, poisoned his whole future relations to David.—*Dean Stanley*. The history of sin in Saul's inner life shows a steady and rapid progress in evil after it had gained footing and mastery in his heart. When a man once gives place to passion in his soul he comes more and more into its power, and is at last completely ruled by it, and driven even more violently on from sin to sin. "He that doeth sin is the slave of sin." *Jealousy*, which, in a heart that has lost God's love and honor as its center, is born of *selfishness*, (wanting all love, honor, joy, for itself alone,) has always for its companion *envy* of the successes, the honor, and the good fortune of others. From *envy* come gradually *hatred* and *enmity*, and then, by hidden or by open ways, *murder*—"He who hateth his brother is a murderer." Parallel to the example of Saul are those of *Cain* and *Joseph's brothers*.—*C. F. Erdmann*.

1 And it came to pass, when he had made an end of speaking unto Saul, that the ¹soul of Jon'a-than

was knit with the soul of Da'vid, ²and Jon'a-than loved him as his own soul.

1 Gen. 44. 30. — 2 Deut. 13. 6; chap.

19. 2; 20. 17; 2 Sam. 1. 26; Prov. 18. 24.

1. When he [David] had made an end of speaking—But little of the conversation between Saul and David is recorded, yet it evidently related to his family, history, and position, as was very proper in view of the honors promised to the conqueror of Goliath. Chap. 17. 25. It brought out such traits of character, that, besides making the king his friend, there then began one of the most remarkable friendships recorded in history. — *D. A. Whedon*. The soul of Jonathan.—The son of Saul. Jonathan had met David before. But the boy-minstrel who drove away with music his father's melancholy seems absolutely to have attracted no notice from him. He was undistinguished from any other servant in the household. With Jonathan a minstrel boy was nothing, a faith-conquering hero every thing. Jonathan was probably considerably older than David, but, in some respects, was very much like him. He was like him in *achievement*. With no other than his armor-bearer, he had won a victory over the Philistines at Michmash that reads like a romance, and is surpassed by no other individual heroic feat of arms. He was like him in *faith*. He went into that battle having as his motto: "There is no restraint to the Lord to save by many or by few." Chap. 14. 6. How much that

reads like David's declaration in his conflict with Goliath: "The Lord saveth not with sword and spear, for the battle is the Lord's!" He was like him in *unquestioning devotion*. When he had learned that it was the will of the Lord that David should be king instead of himself, still in the wilderness of Ziph, he went to David, "and strengthened his hand in God." — *M. C. Hazard*. Was knit—The word "knit" (as in Gen. 44. 30) denotes, under the figure of a chain, the firm union and inseparable unity of souls in friendship, expressing the thought that their inner lives of feeling work deeply into each other, and so each has perpetually fast hold of the other.—*C. F. Erdmann*. With the soul of David—Here was a fellowship of souls. On the part of Jonathan it was the more remarkable, inasmuch as David became his rival for the throne. But even after this became well known Jonathan's love never cooled, but rather warmed with intenser devotion to his friend, and he often gave aid and comfort to the son of Jesse in the time of his persecution. Chap. 23. 17. Well might the psalmist king say, in his requiem over the fallen hero, (2 Sam. 1. 26,) "Thy love to me was wonderful, passing the love of women." — *D. Steele*. Loved him as his own soul—Besides the discomfiture of the Philis-

2 And Saul took him that day, and would let him go no more home to his father's house.

3 Then Jon'a-than and Da'vid made a

3 Chap. 8. 11;

times, David's victory had a double issue: Jonathan's love and Saul's envy, which God so mixed, that the one was a remedy of the other. A good son makes amends for a wayward father. How precious was that stone that killed such an enemy as Goliath, and purchased such a friend as Jonathan!—*Bishop Hall*.

Jonathan prefigured the faithful Israel of God, who hailed the advent of the true David, and rejoiced in his triumphs; Saul typified the envious and malignant scribe and Pharisee who desired to destroy him. Jonathan represents those loving souls who were born and lived under the Law, like John the Baptist and Paul, and who gladly stripped themselves of their own robes, (the robe of legal and ceremonial righteousness, and all the privileges of the Levitical dispensation,) in order that they might do honor to the true David, who fulfilled all the righteousness of the Law, and who spiritualized the Law by the Gospel.—*C. Wordsworth*.

2. Saul took him—Took David into his service, and soon afterward advanced him to positions of trust and honor. He had met David once or twice before as a minstrel, but having given him no special attention, had forgotten him. Now he receives him into the royal household. Let him go no more home—That is, to remain there in his former occupation. He was doubtless permitted to go and visit his father whenever he desired, but not to resume his charge of the sheep as before.—*D. Steele*.

3. Jonathan and David—The words indicate that the proposition came from Jonathan, as was suitable from his rank, as well as from the eagerness of his affection. A covenant—Of friendship, love, and trust, probably with the solemnity of an oath. It was afterward twice repeated. Chap. 20. 16, 42; 23. 18.—*D. A. Whedon*. Because he loved him—True friendship in two souls must be rooted in a like attitude of the heart to a loving God, must exhibit itself in a mutual unselfish devotion of heart in love which is based on a common love to the Lord, and must approve itself in the school of suffering.—*C. F. Erdmann*.

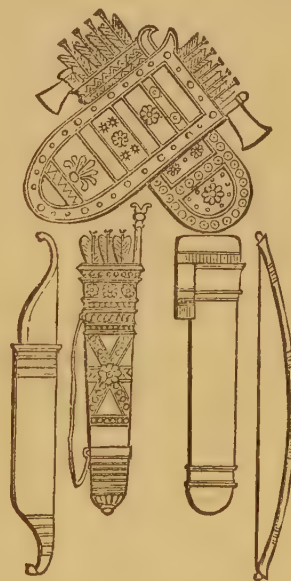
4. Jonathan stripped himself—He was concerned to see so great a soul, though lodged in so fair a body, yet disguised in the mean and despicable dress of a poor shepherd, and,

covenant, because he loved him as his own soul.

4 And Jon'a-than stripped himself of the robe that was upon him, and gave

14. 52; 17. 15.

therefore, takes care to put him speedily into the habit of a courtier, for he gave him a robe, and of a soldier, for he gave him, instead of his staff and sling, a sword and bow, and instead of his shepherd's scrip, a girdle, either a belt or a sash.—*M. Henry*. Now the beholders can say, 'There goes Jonathan's other self; if there be another body under those clothes, there is the same soul.—*Bishop Hall*. The robe that was upon him—To receive any part of the dress which had been worn by a sovereign



Assyrian and Egyptian Quivers and Bows.

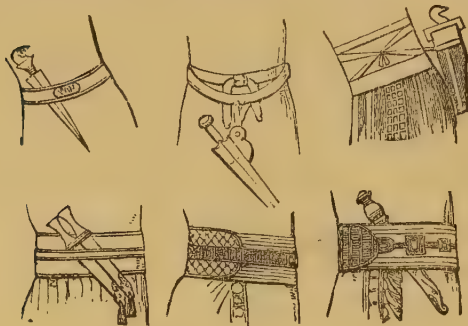
or his eldest son and heir, is deemed in the East the highest honor which can be conferred on a subject. See Esth. 6. 8.—*R. Jamieson*. The mention of the several weapons, which together make a complete war outfit, rather suggests that Jonathan wished to honor David as the military hero, and this manner of sealing their friendship was a proof that the two, as heroes equally crowned by God with victory, could love one another, and that Jonathan was far from feeling envy and jealousy of David for his heroic deed.—*C. F. Erdmann*. His garments

it to Da'vid, and his garments, even to his sword, and to his bow, and to his girdle.

5 And Da'vid went out whithersoever Saul sent him, and ^abehaved himself wisely: and Saul set him over the men of war; and he was accepted in the sight

^a Or, prospered; Matt. 10. 16.—^b Or, Philistines.

—Rather *his armor*, as the word is rendered chap. 17. 39. This, we are immediately told, consisted of his sword, bow, and girdle. The giving of this robe and armor was the seal of the covenant between them.—*D. Steele*. Bows were made of various materials; wood, horn, and even ivory were used. Sometimes the wood and horn were united in the bow, the wood being backed with horn. Metallic bows were also used. See Job 20. 24; Psa. 18. 33. Bows were of various shapes. The Egyptian bow, a round piece of wood from five feet to five and a half long, was either nearly straight with a slight curve at each end, or else showed



Ancient Military Girdles.

a deep curve in the center when unstrung.—*J. M. Freeman*. The gift of a girdle is in the East a token of the greatest confidence and affection, and is very highly prized.—*J. M. Freeman*.

I recollect a tiger-hunting party, held by Meer Alli Moorad in Upper Sindh, where that chief sat in a small tower with his personal friends to see the sport. A Sindhian behaved most valiantly, killing a tiger and her cubs, and the hero was brought up on the tower, when Meer Alli Moorad took from his neck a muslin scarf and bestowed it on the man, who felt himself distinguished above all honor, and remunerated beyond all price.—*Mrs. Postans*.

5. David went out whithersoever Saul sent him—Showing himself as dutiful as he

of all the people, and also in the sight of Saul's servants.

6 And it came to pass as they came, when Da'vid was returned from the slaughter of the ^bPhi-lis'tine, that ^cthe women came out of all cities of Is'ra-el, singing and dancing, to meet king Saul,

^dExod. 15. 20; Judg. 11. 34; Psa. 68. 25; Jer. 31. 4.

was bold and courageous. Those that hope to rule, must first learn to obey. He had approved himself a dutiful son to Jesse his father, and now a dutiful servant to Saul his master; those that are good in one relation, it is to be hoped, will be so in another.—*M. Henry*. **Behaved himself wisely**—See note, Third Quarter, Lesson I, verse 7, where the same word is used. His warlike undertakings were *fortunate and successful*. The verb means "to act prudently, wisely," and then to be successful, as in Josh. 1. 7, (Eng. A. V., "prosper.") It always refers to conduct, to act wisely, and then to be prosperous in one's undertakings.—*C. F. Erdmann*. **Set him over the men of war**—We have no data to determine the exact chronology of the events recorded in this verse. But his appointment over the men of war, and his going out in obedience to Saul's orders, are probably identical with what is related in verses 13 and 14. The writer seems to have inserted them here to show the immediate results of David's victory and Jonathan's friendship.—*D. Steele*. **Was accepted**—Obtained favor and popularity. **Sight of Saul's servants**—David's *winning loveliness of character* is here brought out more strongly by the statement that he did not excite the envy and jealousy

of his fellow-officials at court. "He pleased even the courtiers, who are commonly envious, especially of those who have newly found favor with the king."—*Clericus*.

Those that climb so fast, have need of good heads and good hearts; it is harder to know how to abound, than how to be abased.—*M. Henry*.

6. When David was returned—At the close of the campaign against the Philistines, in which David had played so distinguished a part, even if he did no more than kill Goliath, but the presumption is that he had earned further honors in the pursuit of the enemy, Saul returned in triumph to Gibeah.—*W. Lee*. **Slaughter of the Philistine**—Rather as the margin, "the Philistines." The allusion is not to Goliath, but to one of the expeditions re-

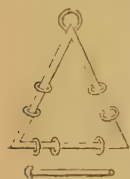
with tabrets, with joy, and with ^c instruments of music.

7 And the women ^e answered *one another* as they played, and said, Saul hath slain his thousands, and Da'vid his ten thousands.

8 And Saul was very wroth, and the saying ^d displeased him; and he said,

^c Three-stringed instruments.—^e Exod. 15. 21.—^d Was evil

ferred to in verse 5, in which David had gained a victory over the Philistines, the fame of which preceded him. — *Speaker's Commentary*. All cities—All the cities near which the returning army passed. **Singing and dancing**—According to the custom of Hebrew women after great victories. Compare Exod. 15. 20; Judg. 11. 34. Their dancing was in the day time, and in the open air, and not by the sexes together. Modern dancing-parties find no sanction here. — *D. A. Whedon*. **Tabrets**—Or *timbrels*, instruments resembling the tambourine, in which the music is made by shaking and striking. **Instruments of music**—Margin, *three-stringed instruments*, as the name of musical instrument occurs here only, and signifies literally, *threes*. The triangle is



probably intended, of which we subjoin an engraving.—*D. Steele*.

We find this custom in Persia, Turkey, etc. Mr. Campbell, the missionary, witnessed it even in Africa. When he was leaving the city of Latta-koo, he fell in with a party of men who were returning from a distant expedition, after an absence of several months. The news of their approach had reached the town, and the women were hastening to meet them. On joining the party, the females marched at their head, clapping their hands and singing with all their might, till they arrived at their homes in the town.—*J. C. Gray*.

7, 8. Answered one another—Chanting antiphonal responses. David his ten thousands—The enthusiastic throng intimate, in an exultant hour, that David's triumph is of more importance than all Saul's victories.—*D. Steele*. Saul was very wroth—Saul could not but feel that the sort of spirit by which the youthful hero had been actuated was precisely that which on many preceding occasions he himself ought to have manifested, and for not doing which the doom of exclusion had been pronounced against him.—*J. Kitto*. To me but thousands—A kingdom brooketh no companion, and majesty more heavil^y taketh injuries to heart.—*Camden*.

They have ascribed unto Da'vid ten thousands, and to me they have ascribed *but* thousands: and *what* can he have more but the kingdom?

9 And Saul ^e eyed Da'vid from that day and forward.

10 And it came to pass on the morrow, that ^f the evil spirit from God

in his eyes; Eccles. 4. 4.—^e Gen. 4. 5.—^f Chap. 16. 14.

What . . . more but the kingdom—Immediately there flashes upon him the suspicion that this son of Jesse is that neighbor of whom Samuel had spoken, (chapter 15. 28,) who was destined to supersede him on the throne.—*D. Steele*. In this foreboding utterance of Saul there was involved not only a conjecture which the result confirmed, but a deep inward truth. If the king of Israel stood powerless before the subjugators of his kingdom at so decisive a period as this, and a shepherd boy came and decided the victory, this was an additional mark of his rejection.—*O. von Gerlach*.

9. Eyed David from that day—Watched all his movements with suspicion and jealousy, and this fact may well account for the king's failure to reward David and his father's house according to all that he had promised the one who would succeed in slaying the insolent Goliath, (chap. 17. 25).—*D. Steele*. It is a very interesting question, whether any tidings of Samuel's visit to Bethlehem had reached the court. It is alike difficult to understand the keeping of such a secret, and the conduct of Saul and Jonathan to David if it had transpired. But something may be ascribed, on the one hand, to the jealousy between Judah and Benjamin, which would lead the elders of Bethlehem to keep a secret so vital to their tribe; or something, on the other supposition, to the fatalism of Saul and the romantic generosity of Jonathan, combined with his faith in the providence of Jehovah. On the whole, we can hardly think that David was yet viewed as Saul's anointed successor, though Jonathan afterward recognizes him in that character, and Saul openly denounces him as a rival.—*Wm. Smith*.

10. On the morrow—The very next day after he conceived malice against David, the evil spirit from God, that had formerly haunted him, seized him again. Those that indulge themselves in envy and uncharitableness, *give place to the devil*, and prepare for the re-entry of the unclean spirit, with seven others more wicked.—*M. Henry*. An evil spirit from God—A demon like those mentioned so frequently in the

came upon Saul, ⁸and he prophesied in the midst of the house: and Da'vid played with his hand, as at other times: and *there was* a javelin in Saul's hand.

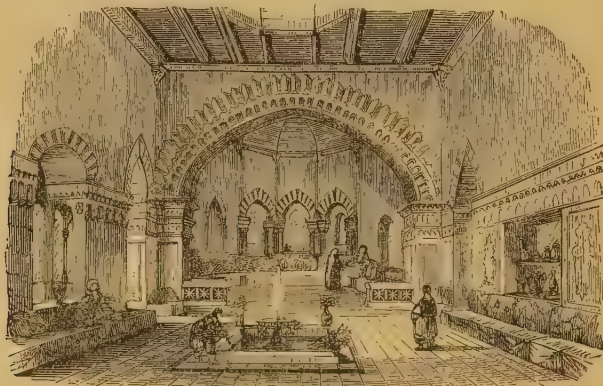
⁸ Chap. 19. 24; 1 Kings 18. 29; Acts 16. 16.

New Testament, sent by permission of the Lord, as Satan in the case of Job. Job 2. 7. It is not only by Saul's servants, but by the sacred writer himself, that we are told it was an evil spirit from the Lord; so we cannot regard it as merely a superstitious and mistaken notion of Saul's physicians. But while he thus became possessed by a supernatural evil power, it is very likely that a mental desire bordering on insanity was the substratum on which the evil spirit worked.—*D. Steele.* **He prophesied**—He utters impassioned cries, and, perhaps, falls prostrate on the floor and breathes forth his inner ravings like one holding communion with an unseen world.—*D. Steele.* Saul's condition of mind is neither that of simple madness nor that of true prophecy. He is under the control of a power higher than himself; but it is an evil power. For the precise expression of this supernaturally-determined condition of mind and soul, in which the whole

11 And Saul ⁹cast the javelin; for he said, I will smite Da'vid even to the wall *with it.* And Da'vid avoided out of his presence twice.

⁹ Chap. 19. 10; 20. 38; 27. 24.

esying in chap. 10. 10 was the effect of the spirit of God coming upon him. At the same time it is quite true that *madness* and *prophesying* were considered as near akin. (See Jer. 29. 26; 2 Kings 9. 11.)—*Speaker's Commentary.* **In the house**—In the large room used as the place of the court. Saul's house was probably not unlike the Oriental houses of the present time. **David played**—Seeking, as before, (chap. 16. 16,) to quell the mental ravings of the king, and drive out the demon that possessed him.—*D. Steele.* Compare David, with his harp in his hand, aiming to serve Saul, and Saul, with his javelin in his hand, aiming to slay David.—*M. Henry.* **In Saul's hand**—Saul seems to have held the javelin in his hand as a scepter, according to ancient custom.—*Keil.* **There was a javelin**—Not the lighter spear that usually goes under that name, but one much heavier than the ordinary spear, and more befitting Saul's great size and strength. A mere back-hand



Interior of Modern Syrian House.

spiritual energy of the man moves freely, yet in a sphere into which it is supernaturally brought becoming for the time one with the spirit, the Hebrew has no other word than *naba*, and the English no other word than *prophecy*.—*C. F. Erdmann.* It is impossible to give the sense of *raving* to the word *prophesied*, as though a merely natural state of frenzy were intended. The *prophesying* here was as directly the effect of the coming of the evil spirit upon Saul, as the *proph-*

blow from this ponderous weapon, in the hand of Abner, thrust its blunt end clear through the body of Asahel. 2 Sam. 2. 23.—*M. C. Hazard.*

11. Cast the javelin—By comparing this passage with chap. 19. 10, it would appear that on the first occasion Saul did not actually cast the javelin, but only brandished it to take aim at David, and that he escaped before Saul actually cast it. The word rendered *cast* is probably capable of being so understood.—*Speaker's Com.*

12 And Saul was afraid of Da'vid, because ¹⁰ the LORD was with him, and was departed ¹¹ from Saul.

13 Therefore Saul removed him from him, and made him his captain over a thousand; and ¹² he went out and came in before the people.

14 And Da'vid ⁶ behaved himself wise-

ly in all his ways; and ¹³ the LORD *was* with him.

15 Wherefore, when Saul saw that he behaved himself very wisely, he was afraid of him.

16 But all Is'ra-el and Ju'dah loved Da'vid, because he went out and came in before them.

¹⁰ Chap. 16, 13.—¹¹ Chap. 38, 15.—¹² Num. 27, 17; 2 Sam. 5, 2.

e Or, prospered.—¹³ Gen. 39, 2; Josh. 6, 27; Acts 7, 9.

In this and the following narrative of Saul persecuting David, we may see a foreshadowing of the history of the Jew madly raging against the true David, Jesus Christ. "*Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me?*" (Acts 9, 4.) the words of Christ himself to Saul of Tarsus, suggest the comparison. Saul of Gibeah gave place to the evil spirit, and came to a miserable end. Saul of Tarsus listened to the voice of the Holy Spirit, and is glorious among the saints; cf. above on chap. 9, 2.—*C. Wordsworth.*

12. Saul was afraid of David—One would have thought, rather, that David should have been afraid of Saul, because the devil was so strong with him, than that Saul should be afraid of David, because the Lord was with him; yet we find all the fear in Saul of David, none in David of Saul.—*Bishop Hall.* Because the Lord was with him—The fact that David did not leave Saul immediately after this attempt upon his life may be explained, not merely on the supposition that he looked upon this attack as being simply an outburst of momentary madness, which would pass away, but still more from his firm, believing confidence, which kept him from forsaking the post in which the Lord had placed him without any act of his own, until he saw that Saul was plotting to take his life, not merely in these fits of insanity, but also, at other times, in calm deliberation.—*Keil.*

13, 14. Saul . . . made him his captain—This is probably the same appointment as that referred to in verse 5. David was not made the leading officer over all the host, for this position Abner held, (chap. 17, 55,) but he was made commander of a regiment.—*D. Steele.* Went out and came in—Fulfilling faithfully the various trusts reposed in him. Behaved himself wisely—See note, verse 5. The Lord was with him—He carried out military enterprises, and that so wisely and prosperously, that the blessing of the Lord rested upon all he did. But these successes on David's part increased Saul's fear of him, whereas all Israel and Judah came to love him as their leader. David's success in all that he took in hand compelled Saul to promote him; and his standing with

the people increased with his promotion.—*Keil.*

15. Saul saw that he behaved . . . wisely—The word *wisely*, as we have seen in note on verse 5, contains the double idea of human prudence on the one side, and of prosperity or success, which comes as God's blessing, on the other. Saul saw that David showed capacity and ability in all his undertakings; he noticed his evident success as the token of the Divine favor; he observed his growing popularity with the people, and all this made him all the more convinced that David was the man whom God had chosen for the kingdom; so that he feared and hated him more and more.

Men think the way to be feared is to hector and threaten, which makes them feared by fools only, but despised by the wise and good; whereas the way to be both feared and loved, feared by those to whom we would wish to be a terror, and loved by those to whom we would wish to be a delight is to *behave ourselves wisely*. Wisdom makes the face to shine, and commands respect.—*M. Henry.*

16. All Israel and Judah—The separate mention of the men of Judah shows how little union there was between Judah and Ephraim even at this time, a circumstance which throws light upon the whole after history.—*Speaker's Commentary.* Because he went out and came in—They did not love him *because* he went out and came in before the people, but this circumstance explains how it was that he was known to them. Had he continued to be in Saul's household he would have been little known, but as a captain of a thousand he was brought into public life.—*Speaker's Commentary.* The love of the whole people for him now grew still greater, his consideration rose still higher. This must needs have increased Saul's *fear*, and along with it his envy and jealousy. So Saul's condition of soul is portrayed in progressive development with psychological truthfulness.—*C. F. Erdmann.*

There is not the smallest nerve of the human body that cannot be made to quiver all through

with agony. These nerves are spread throughout all the bodily frame. Let any one count up, if he can, the breadth of surface that is thus presented lying open at every point to be thus affected, and then say what a storehouse of suffering a human body is. And there is not a single disposition or affection of the human spirit—no, not even the best and purest—that in some way or other, by overstraining or misdirection, by disappointment and laceration, may not become a source of inward misery; whilst lying in the dark corners of the soul, brooding, sleeping, or kept in check, there lie those vulture-passions, pride and lust, and ambition and covetousness, and jealousy and malice, any one of which, if once let fully loose, once suffered to rage and riot, could make of any heart a hell of wildest disorder and ever-dripping woe. Think, then, of Saul, as originally a man not worse than others—morally, perhaps, as well as physically, above the level of his tribe and times. Think of the amount of mischief that the yielding to the passion that he cherished toward David inflicted upon him; how it blinded him, how it hardened him, how it stifled all the kindly affections of his nature, how it quenched even parental love, how it dyed his hands in the blood of the priesthood, how, linking itself with all the willfulness and recklessness and ungodliness of his nature, it lashed him on and on, as an avenging fury, itself its punishment, and then say what capacities of self-torture lie folded up within every human soul.—*Sunday Magazine*.

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Practical Root Thoughts.

[SUCCESS IN LIFE.]

1. A lovable and winning nature is an important element contributing to obtain success in life. Ver. 1-3.
2. Success in life requires force and energy of character. Ver. 5.
3. Success in life requires tact and wisdom in the use of opportunities. Ver. 5.
4. Success in life is gained by courage, winning the admiration of all. Vers. 6, 7.
5. Success in life is aided by a generous character, forgetting wrongs, and willing to help those in trouble. Vers. 9-11.
6. Success in life is gained by fidelity in the accomplishment of every task. Vers. 12-14.
7. Success in life depends upon the favor and presence of God, and is obtained by all who have the Lord with them. Vers. 12-16.

B. C. 1062.]

LESSON X.

[Dec. 9.]

DAVID'S FRIEND, JONATHAN.—1 Sam. 20. 32-42.

GOLDEN TEXT.—A man that hath friends must show himself friendly; and there is a friend that sticketh closer than a brother.—PROV. 18. 24.

TIME.—B. C. 1062.

PLACE.—Probably Gibeah, Saul's residence, in the tribe of Benjamin.

CONNECTING LINKS.—See itinerary of David's life at the end of the lesson. (1) David's marriage to Saul's daughter. 1 Sam. 18. 17-30. (2) David's flight from Saul. 1 Sam. 19. 1-18. (3) David with Samuel at Naioth. 1 Sam. 19. 19-24. (4) Jonathan's intercession for David. 1 Sam. 20. 1-29.

INTRODUCTION.—So far as it appears from that narrative up to the time that Samuel, Saul, and David met at Naioth, the king had no positive evidence that David was his appointed successor. His own suspicious temper and David's great popularity and commanding abilities engendered a strong belief that it might be so. But never once previous to that interview did he, by any word or deed, give indication that he counted David as a rival pretender to the throne, as a competitor with himself and his family for the kingdom. Immediately after that interview, however, on the first public occasion that occurs, he openly proclaims this, not as an imagination of his own, but as a fact, of which he had in some way been assured. Let us but assume that he got his first authentic intelligence of the fact from the lips of Samuel at Ramah, that the same was the case with David, and the after conduct of both stands at once explained. It was

the last opportunity that Samuel ever had of meeting with Saul, and nothing would be more natural than that he should seize upon it to reveal the whole truth to the king. Saul had sunk amazed, subdued, upon the ground, when the visitation of the Spirit came upon him, and may have shown some symptoms of returning to a better frame of mind; but when Samuel pours the unwelcome tidings in his ear, when he gets this confirmation of his worst fears, instead of lessening, as it should have done, his spite at David, instead of turning him from his deadly purpose to cut him off by death, it but aggravates the fatal passion that had got the rule of his dark spirit, and he returns from Naioth determined to do every thing to frustrate the Divine decree.—*W. Hanna*. The interview brings out all the peculiarities of Jonathan's character, his little artifices, his love for both his father and his friend, his bitter disappointment at his father's ungovernable fury, his familiar sport of archery, under cover of which the whole meeting takes place. The former compact between the two friends is resumed, extending even to their immediate posterity; Jonathan laying such emphasis on this portion of the agreement as almost to suggest the belief that he had a slight misgiving of David's future conduct in this respect. With tender words and wild tears the two friends parted, never again to meet in the royal home.—*Dean Stanley*.

32 And Jon'a-than answered Saul his father, and said unto him, Wherefore shall he be slain? what hath he done?

33 And Saul cast a javelin at him to smite him: whereby Jon'a-than knew

that it was determined of his father to slay David.

34 So Jon'a-than arose from the table in fierce anger and did eat no meat the second day of the month: for he was

1 Gen. 31. 36; chap. 19. 5; Psa. 82. 4; Prov. 14. 25;

24. 11; 31. 9; Matt. 27. 23; Luke 23. 32.

32. Jonathan answered—Saul was at the table, where David's seat had been vacant for two days. The king commanded Jonathan to bring David, that he might be slain, for he declared that while David lived his own house would not be secure upon the throne. **What hath he done**—Jonathan, true to his friend, refuses to believe him guilty of treason.

Jonathan stands in shadow behind, yet between, Saul, his father, and David, his friend. A keen scrutiny of history reveals the fact that the conspicuous personage is not always the most potent. Warwick, the king-maker, with his princely gifts and his almost royal consort, wielded dominion which the Henries and Edwards, who furnished heads upon which to display the mere symbols of power, were glad to solicit. More than any other Scripture character Jonathan was the king-maker. Jonathan humanly created Saul and David kings. He was the willing yet inconspicuous link which joined the two thrones—the gold between the jewels. Possessing Saul's physical characteristics, his military skill and prowess, combined with David's enthusiasm and devotion, in many traits he eclipsed both. Whatever of stability, or dignity, or breadth there was in Saul's kingdom was a praise to his son who projected and won the battle which really established it. Whatever of splendor there was in David's reign, whether of arms, or wealth, or religious fervor, sheds a luster upon him who gave David his scepter, aye, who, by a sublime and unparalleled preference, placed his beloved friend in his own hereditary and royal seat. There are two characteristics which belong to so rare a man in a supreme degree: I will call them *Courage* and *Magnanimity*.—*W. A. Bartlett*.

33. Saul cast a javelin—See notes on Lesson IX, verses 10, 11.—Or *brandished it*, chap. 18. 11. We see here Saul's ungoverned violence. What a scene to enact before his whole court on a solemn feast-day! and what impolicy, with such dangerous neighbors as the Philistines ever on the watch, to alienate his own heroic son and his chief warrior, and lay the seeds of disunion among his subjects at the same moment. — *Speaker's Commentary*. **Whereby Jonathan knew**—He had before been disposed to attribute his father's acts of violence toward David to his madness, and the demon that at times possessed him; but now he is convinced that David's suspicions of his bloody design (ver. 3) are well founded, and he arose from the table in a wild tumult of passions, and the next morning, true to his word, he went forth to bid David fly.—*D. Steele*. The love of Jonathan for David is put to a severe test by a threefold discovery which he makes; he gets a glimpse of the real *disposition* cherished by his royal father toward his friend, the heroic youth; of the high *destiny* which God designs for his beloved friend; and of the *danger* which threatens himself through his connection with David.—*F. W. Krummacher*.

34. Arose from the table—It was probably the afternoon meal, as the meeting with David took place on the following morning. **In fierce anger**—Under great provocations the meekest cannot always refrain from anger; but when its emotions are felt, it is our wisdom to withdraw in silence, and it is generous to be more grieved for our insulted friends than for

grieved for Da'vid, because his father had done him shame.

35 And it came to pass in the morning, that Jon'a-than went out into the field at the time appointed with Da'vid, and a little lad with him.

36 And he said unto his lad, Run, find out now the arrows which I shoot. And as the lad ran, he shot an arrow ^abeyond him.

37 And when the lad was come to the place of the arrow which Jon'a-than

had shot, Jon'a-than cried after the lad, and said, *Is not the arrow beyond thee?*

38 And Jon'a-than cried after the lad, Make speed, haste, stay not. And Jon'a-than's lad gathered up the arrows, and came to his master.

39 But the lad knew not any thing: only Jon'a-than and Da'vid knew the matter.

40 And Jon'a-than gave his ^bartillery unto ^chis lad, and said unto him, Go, carry *them* to the city.

^aTo pass over him.—^bInstruments.

^cThat was his.

ourselves. — *T. Scott.* He was grieved for David—The generosity of Jonathan's character is very apparent. He did not resent the injury and insult offered to himself so much as the wrong done to his friend.—*Speaker's Commentary.* Done him shame—The way in which Saul spoke of the relation of Jonathan to David, and his indirect declaration that David was a rebel against him, the king, and therefore deserved death, was shame and insult enough. — *C. F. Erdmann.*

35. Jonathan went out . . . at the time appointed—See verses 18-23. As to the sign which it was their purpose to concert, Jonathan agrees, by David's desire, to observe whether Saul misses him during the next two days at a celebration of the feast of the new moon, when the king was wont to assemble the chief officers of the court at his table, for he might conjecture that David was with Jonathan, and so expect that when Jonathan came to court he would be accompanied by his friend. Meanwhile, David himself is to hide in the open country by a desolate heap of stones in the place where he had once before concealed himself under similar circumstances; Jonathan is then to come into the neighborhood of it and discharge three arrows toward it as if he were making that his mark; in reality, however, he is either to overshoot it or let his arrows fall short of it; then, as his attendant runs toward the mark, if he cries to him, "The arrows lie nearer this way," David is to come forth confidently, for that is the token of a possible reconciliation with Saul, but if he cries to him, "They lie further on," then David is to go whithersoever God may send him. — *H. Ewald.* A little lad with him—Who would not so easily suspect any thing; this trifling notice is of great value as testimony to the historical realism of the occurrence. — *Thentius.*

35, 37. He shot an arrow beyond him—While in verses 20-22 this procedure is summa-

rily described of *three* arrows, the account here is of *one*. The difference is not to be explained by the supposition that Jonathan shortened the affair and shot only once, because there was danger in delay, for the shooting of three arrows was a principal point in the agreement, and if there had been such need of haste, the following parting scene could not have taken place. Rather we must suppose that Jonathan did so with *each* of the three arrows. Either, as Bunsen remarks, Jonathan shot the arrows one right after another, or he thrice repeated it.—*C. F. Erdmann.* Cried after the lad—In a loud voice that David, who was in hiding, might hear. *Is not the arrow*—According to the agreement with David which referred to three arrows to be shot Jonathan calls to the boy, "Is not the arrow beyond thee?" Jonathan uses a question instead of direct discourse (as in verses 20-22) in order more certainly to make the boy believe that he was merely practicing at a mark.—*C. F. Erdmann.* That word (*beyond*) David knew the meaning of better than the lad.—*M. Henry.*

38, 39. Make speed, haste—When the boy came to the place of the shot arrow, (that is, to the place to which the arrow had flown,) Jonathan called after him, "*See the arrow is* (lies) *away from thee, farther off;*" and again, "*Quickly haste; do not stand still,*" that he might not see David, who was somewhere near; and the boy picked up the arrow and came to his lord. — *Keil.* Though these words appear to be addressed to the lad, yet they were spoken to David, indicating that his life was at stake, and only a prompt flight could save him.—*A. Clarke.* The lad knew not—Knew not that the words were a signal, and that David was listening with anxious heart.

40. Gave his artillery—The French word, "*artillerie*," signifies "archery," and the term is still used in England, in the designation of

41 And as soon as the lad was gone, Da'vid arose out of a place toward the south, and fell on his face to the ground, and bowed himself three times: and they kissed one another, and wept one with another, until Da'vid exceeded.

d Or, The LORD be witness

the "Artillery Company of London," the association of archers, though they have long disused bows and arrows.—*R. Jamieson*. Rather, *his implements*, his bow, arrows, and quiver. Jonathan is not content to dismiss David with a mere signal; he covets one more interview and fond embrace.—*D. Steele*.

41. As soon as the lad was gone—When the unfavorable sign had been given, which he knew would render his friend a fugitive, Jonathan could not resist the desire again to commune with him before he departed.—*J. Kitto*. Toward the south—Or, more literally, from the side of the south; that is, southward from where Jonathan was standing.—*D. Steele*. David rose from the south side of the rock, where he had been concealed, the preceding affair having occurred on the north side, whence the boy returned to the city, which lay north of David's hiding-place, so that the latter was completely hid from him.—*C. F. Erdmann*. The Septuagint in both places read *argab* or *ergab*, a word meaning a heap of stones. If this is the true reading, David's hiding-place was either a natural cavernous rock which was called *Argab*, or some ruin of an ancient building, equally suited for a hiding-place.—*Speaker's Commentary*. Fell on his face—It is and was the custom, in approaching a sovereign or prince, to pause, and bow at regulated intervals. Xenophon ascribes the origin of the practice to Cyrus, but it was of earlier date, although he may have first introduced it among the Persians. David thus testified the respect due to Jonathan's high station, in advancing to meet him; but when they came near, every thing but their heart-brotherhood was forgotten.—*J. Kitto*. In token, doubtless, of his unshaken loyalty to Jonathan as the son of his king, as well as his friend; and in acknowledgment of Jonathan's power to kill him if he saw fit.—*Speaker's Commentary*. To do Jonathan honor, that he might implore his help or gratefully acknowledge his kindness.—*Clericus*. He did obeisance and called him the saviour of his life.—*Josephus*. Wept . . . until David exceeded—When he had sent his attendant back to the town with his weapons, David creeps

42 And Jon'a-than said to Da'vid, Go in peace, ^dforasmuch as we have sworn both of us in the name of the LORD, saying, The LORD be between me and thee, and between my seed and thy seed forever. And he arose and departed: and Jon'a-than went into the city.

of that which, etc.

forth, his soul full of the deepest emotion, and the two friends weep long together; but David more than Jonathan, who does not forget the possible danger in which they were at that moment standing.—*H. Ewald*. He was now about to become an exile from his friends, his wife, his kindred, the people of God, and all the solemnities of sacred worship.—*Bishop Patrick*. His affection for Jonathan, coupled with his sense of Saul's injustice, and his own injured innocence, fully accounts for his strong emotion. It was, too, his first experience in the school of adversity.—*Speaker's Commentary*.

Strong men weeping. (1) Great occasion for it here: a) Personal separation. b) Mad injustice of their father, (comp. chap. 24. 16.) c) Prospect of a bitter conflict. (2) Not unbecoming when on sufficient occasion: Compatible a) with manly courage and spirit. David and Jonathan were certainly brave. b) With great self-control, (chaps. 17. 29; 18. 14; 20. 32.) c) With living trust in providence, (chap. 24. 12.)—*Broadus*.

42. Jonathan said . . . go in peace—The oath recited by Jonathan gives the reason or ground why David should depart in peace, without any fear of receiving evil at the hands of Jonathan.—*Speaker's Commentary*. In the name of the Lord—The covenant of friendship which Jonathan had made with David, (chap. 18. 1, sq.) was a covenant in the Lord, (chap. 23. 18.) It was therefore not a friendship which rested merely on mutual good feeling, but was based on a recognized common union of heart with the living God. Jonathan's heart clung in firm faith and trust to the Lord; this was the root of his heroic courage and his victorious prowess, (comp. chap. 14. 6;) this fresh power of faith, which elevated and sanctified his whole being, won him David's regard and love. David's whole life-course showed Jonathan the direct wonderful gracious leading of the Lord, to which he humbly submitted himself. The two hearts were one in looking to and hoping in the living God, in humble obedience to his holy will. This was the foundation of their communion of love and life in the Lord.—*C. F. Erdmann*. The Lord be between me and thee—This is the cul-

minating point in the mutual relations of the two friends who furnished the eternal type of the perfection of noble friendship; and, moreover, in these last hours before their separation, all the threads of their destinies, henceforth so widely different, are secretly woven together. It is also at this point, consequently, that the clearest anticipation of the whole subsequent history already shines through. As Jonathan here foresees, David afterward obtains the kingdom; and in accordance with his oath to his friend, he afterward, when a powerful king, always spares the descendants of Jonathan, in grateful remembrance of his dearly loved friend, and never loses an opportunity of showing them kindness.—*H. Ewald.* He [David] arose and departed.—Upon a life of exile. He thought it was safer to yield to the storm than attempt to brave it; though he could have soon raised a very powerful party in Israel had he used the means which were so much in his power. But as he neither sought nor affected the kingdom, he left it to the providence of God to bring him in by such means, at such a way, and in such a time, as was most suited to his godly wisdom.—*A. Clarke.* Jonathan went into the city.—From which one may infer, what the after history also indicates, that Jonathan's filial duty and patriotism prevented a complete rupture with his father. Jonathan's conduct in this, as in every thing, was most admirable.—*Speaker's Commentary.* The love of Jonathan for David we shall have occasion to follow in David's history. But we do not, perhaps, sufficiently appreciate the devotion of Jonathan for his unfortunate father. From the time that he first appears he is Saul's constant companion. He is always present at the royal table. He holds the office afterward known as that of "the king's friend." The deep attachment of the father and the son is every-where implied. Jonathan can only go on his dangerous expedition by concealing it from Saul. Saul's vow is confirmed, and its tragic effect deepened by his feeling for Jonathan—"though it be Jonathan my son." Jonathan can not bear to believe his father's enmity to David. "My father will do nothing, great or small, but that he will show it me; and why should my father hide this thing from me? it is not so." To him, if to any one, the frenzy of the king was amenable: "Saul hearkened unto the voice of Jonathan." But now that the final parting was to come, he took his lot with his father's decline, not with his friend's rise—and "in death they were not divided."—*Dean Stanley.*

Saul, the persecutor of David, was a type of the unbelieving and disobedient Jew, once endued with great spiritual gifts and privileges, but falling away from God by pride, vain-glory, self-will, and obstinacy, and at length rejecting Christ. But Jonathan, Saul's son, was a figure of all those faithful Israelites, such as John the Baptist, Nathanael, and the loving apostle Peter, and the penitent thief, and the beloved disciple John, and Paul, who were born under the Law, and who hailed the rising glory of the true David, and stripped themselves of the legal insignia in which they were attired, (see above, chap. 18. 4,) and whose hearts were knit to Christ, and who made a solemn covenant with him, even at the time when he was rejected and persecuted by the Jewish Saul, and who looked forward with faith to the time when the kingdom of the true David would be established, and his foes made his footstool, and his enemies be cut off before his face, and who prayed to him to show mercy to themselves personally in their lifetime, and to their posterity after their death, forevermore, (see verses 14, 15,) and who incurred danger, scorn, and death from their own parents and relatives for the sake of Christ.—*C. Wordsworth.*

Authorities to be Consulted.

Kitto's Daily Bible Illustrations, 84th week. Smith's Old Testament History, chap. xx. Milman's History of the Jews, book vii. Kitto's History of the Bible, chap. xvi. Stanley's Jewish Church, Lecture xxii. Guthrie's Sunday Magazine, vol. i, p. 530. Ewald's History of Israel, vol. iii, p. 73. Lesson-helps for 1876, 1st Quarter, Lesson V. Geikie's Hours with the Bible, vol. iii, chap. 6.

Practical Root Thoughts.

[TRUE FRIENDSHIP.]

1. The true friend is constant in friendship, even when surrounded by enemies, and in face of danger. Vers. 32, 33.
2. The true friend is more sensitive to his friend's honor than to his own. Ver. 34.
3. The true friend seeks the interest of his friend even when it is at his own cost and loss. Vers. 32-34.
4. The true friend is tender and deep in his sympathies, finding tokens where words will not avail. Vers. 35-39.
5. The true friend shows his love by acts of affection. Ver. 41.
6. The true friend bases his affection for man upon his love and fidelity toward God.

The Itinerary of David.

NOTES CHRONOLOGICAL AND GEOGRAPHICAL.

There is no inspired chronology by which the date of every event in the life of David is to be de-

initely settled. The following outline may be regarded as tolerably accurate, however, and the teacher may turn to this table to determine the chronological and topographical relations of the several lessons.

We have given the outline the form of an *itinerary*, so that it may also suggest a series of week-evening "Studies in Sacred History and Geography."

1. David born 1085 (or 1083) B. C., in Beth-lehem. [B., a town south of Jerusalem, called B.-Ephratah. Micah 5. 2; B.-Judah, 1 Sam. 17. 12; B. of Judea, Matt. 2. 1; City of David, Luke 2. 4; now called Beit-Lahm. On a hill, 300 feet higher than Jerusalem. A deep valley on N. E. side of B., where David, and the shepherds of Luke 2. 8, kept their flocks. In this valley a well. 2 Sam. 23. 15-18. Present population 3,000.]

Here Samuel anointed David, 1068 (or 1070) B. C. (D. 15 years old.)

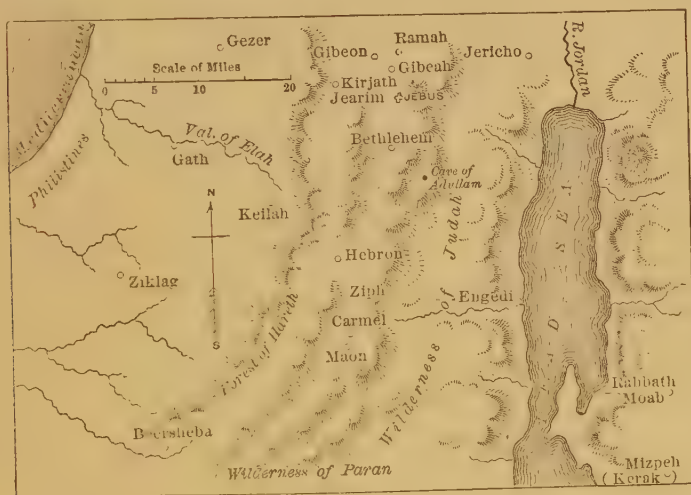
4. From Beth-lehem to the Valley of Elah. 1 Sam. 17. 2, 19, 20. 1063 B. C. (D. 20 or 22 years old.) Distance, about twelve miles. [Elah, probably the present Wady-es-Sumpt, a broad valley or plain between Beth-lehem and Gaza. Now covered with grain fields. A brook runs through the valley.]

Here David smote and beheaded the giant. 1 Sam. 17.

5. From Elah to Gibeah. We cannot tell whether or not David followed the Philistines with the conquering army. 1 Sam. 17. 52. Probably returned from Elah to Gibeah, about seventeen miles direct or, via Beth-lehem, twenty-two miles.

Here at Gibeah the angry and jealous King Saul tried to kill David.

6. From Gibeah to slay the Philistines. 1 Sam. 18. 27. If D. went as far as Elah, (see ITIN.) he traveled seventeen miles, which, with seventeen on return trip = thirty-four miles. Married Michal, Saul's daughter, 1062 B. C. (D. 21 or 23 years old.)



Map of David's Wandering.

2. From Beth-lehem to Gibeah of Saul, 1065 B. C. (D. 18 or 20 years old.) 1 Sam. 16. 14-23. Distance, about ten miles. [Gibeah, Samuel's home, 1 Sam. 15. 34, now called Tel-el-Ful, four miles above Jerusalem, on the road to Beth-el. Gibeah means *hill*. Gesenius derives it from a Hebrew root which "signifies to be round or humped, (compare the Latin *gibbus*, English *gibbous*, Arabic *jebel*, a mountain, and the German *gipfel*.)"—*Strong's Cyc.* "Naturally a strong place. It was on the very crest of the mountain range, and commanded a wide view, so that Saul's watchmen could give timely notice of the approach of the enemy."—*Porter*.] David, doubtless, carried his harp with him. 1 Sam. 16. 14-23.

3. From Gibeah returned to Beth-lehem. 1 Sam. 17. 15. Ten miles.

7. From Gibeah to fight the Philistines again, and returned to Gibeah. 1 Sam. 19. 8, 9. Possibly twenty miles each way = forty miles. Saul again sought David's life. Michal aids D. in escaping. 1 Sam. 19. 9-17. 1062 B. C.

8. From Gibeah to Ramah to consult Samuel. 1 Sam. 19. 18, 19. [Ramah, (a high place,) Ramathaim-zophim. 1 Sam. 1. 1; 8. 4. To Samuel what Gibeah was to Saul. Naioth, 1 Sam. 19. 18, (habitation or pastures,) may indicate the buildings in which Samuel held his school of the prophets. The situation of Ramah "is, without exception, the most complicated and disputed problem of sacred topography. To this spot there are no less than eight claimants: Ramleh, Nebi Samwil, Er Ram, Ramah, (near Beth-lehem,) the Frank Mountain, Ramet el-Khalil, (near Hebron,) Soba, (five miles

west of Jerusalem,) and Rame."—*Stanley.*] If, with Dr. Robinson, we select *Soba*, the distance from Gibeah is about seven miles. Saul's servants, and finally Saul himself, followed David. For curious consequences, see 1 Sam. 19, 19-24.

9. From Naioth, in Ramah, to meet Jonathan, probably near Gibeah, seven miles from Ramah.

Here the arrows were shot by Jonathan, and David parted from his beloved friend. 1 Sam. 20. 18-39. 1062 B. C. (D. 21 or 23.)

10. From Gibeah to Nob. 1062 B. C. [Probably Nob (height, hill) was situated on Olivet, north-east of Jerusalem. Near Anathoth. Neh. 11. 32.] From G. to N. about three miles. Here occurred the scene connected with Ahimelech, the show-bread, and the sword of Goliath. 1 Sam. 21. 1-9.

11. From Nob to Gath. 1 Sam. 21. 10. [Gath, probably same as Bethogabra, Eleutheropolis, and Beit-Jibrin.] 23 miles from N. to G. Here David feigned madness. 1 Sam. 21. 11-15.

12. From Gath to Adullam. 1 Sam. 22. 1, 2. 1062 B. C. [The cave Khureitun, "the only very large cavern in Palestine," twenty miles from Beit-Jibrin, (Gath,) between Bethlehem and the Dead Sea, is believed by many to be Adullam.] David knew this region. He had been a shepherd here.

13. From Adullam to Mizpeh of Moab. 1 Sam. 22. 3. [Mizpeh may be same as Kir-Moab, or Kerak, 45 miles from the cave of Adullam, on the south-east border of the Dead Sea.] Stands on a cliff. Is 3,800 feet above the Mediterranean. Can be seen from Mount Olivet on a clear day.

14. From "the hold" to the forest of Hareth. 1 Sam. 22. 5. ["The hold" may refer to Mizpeh of Moab; to the Frank Mountain, (near the cave); to Masada, (on west shore of Dead Sea, nearly opposite Kerak, and 26 miles from the cave); or it may be translated "in exile." Hareth, (thicket,) somewhere in the south of Judah, not far from Ziph, which is two miles from Hebron. "We may assume that the forest of Hareth was an abundant wooded land somewhere well up the heights between the Dead Sea and Hebron."—*Knox.*] From Mizpeh to Hareth, 30 or 35 miles. From Masada to Hareth, about fifteen miles.

15. From Hareth to Keilah, to deliver the people from the Philistines. 1 Sam. 23. 1-12. [K. now called Kela. Probably ten miles north-west of Hareth.]

16. From Keilah to the mountains of Ziph. 1 Sam. 23. 13-15. [Ziph, (a flowing,) now el-Zif, a low hill three miles south of Hebron.] From Keilah to Ziph about ten miles. Here Jonathan visited David. 1 Sam. 23. 16-18. Ziphite spies informed Saul of David's whereabouts. 1 Sam. 23. 19-23. Saul pursued, but David fled.

17. From Ziph to the wilderness of Maon, in the south of Jeshimon. 1 Sam. 23. 24. [Maon, (habitation,) now Ma'in, seven miles from Hebron. Jeshimon, (the waste,) a "desert tract in the south of Palestine on both sides of the Dead Sea."—*Stanley.* From Ziph to Maon at five miles.] Saul's pursuit arrested by report of a Philistine invasion. 1 Sam. 23. 27, 28.

18. From Maon to the strongholds of Engedi. 1 Sam. 23. 29. Fifteen miles. [Engedi, (fount of kids,) on west shore of Dead Sea. Originally called Hazazontamar. Josh. 15. 62; 2 Chron. 20. 2. "The neighboring cliffs full of natural and artificial caves and sepulchers." "Here the *beden*, or mountain-goat, still starts up at the approach of the traveler, and bounds along the face of the rocks before him."—*Kitto.*] Saul with 3,000 men pursues David.

Here David returned good for evil, and delivered Saul from death. 1 Sam. 24. 3-22, 1060 B. C. (D. 23 or 25 years old.)

19. From Engedi to Wilderness of Paran. 1 Sam. 25. 1. [P. in the vicinity of Beersheba and Kadesh. Gen. 21. 14, 21; Num. 13. 3, 17. 26.] The story of Nabal and Abigail. 1 Sam. 25. Carmel, v. 2. [Same as Kurmul, ten miles south-east of Hebron.] Engedi to Beersheba, 35 miles. Beersheba to Carmel, 23 miles.

20. From Paran to Ziph. 1 Sam. 26. 1-5. Again delivered Saul. Verses 5-25. Beersheba to Ziph, 24 miles. 1055 (or 1059) B. C. (D. 26 or 28 years old.)

21. From Ziph to Gath, seventeen miles. 1 Sam. 27. 1, 2.

22. From Gath to Ziklag. [Cannot locate Z. But in south of Judah.]

23. From Ziklag to attack the Geshurites, Gezrites, and Amalekites, and return to Gath. 1 Sam. 27. 8. (Unknown.)

24. From Gath toward Jezreel and return. Cannot tell how far he went; probably nearly to Jezreel, seventy miles. Suspected by the Philistine chiefs, and sent back. 1 Sam. 29. 1-11. 1053 (or 1055) B. C. (D. 30 years of age.)

25. From Ziklag to Brook Besor and beyond. 1 Sam. 30. 1-20. [Besor (Wady Sheriah) enters the Mediterranean Sea near Gaza.] How far "beyond" this D. went we do not know. Gaza from Gath, thirty miles. Returned to the brook, and to Ziklag.

Here, by the Brook Besor, David taught a lesson of equity. 1 Sam. 30. 21-25. At Ziklag David heard of Saul's death. 2 Sam. 1. 1-27.

26. From Ziklag to Hebron. 2 Sam. 2. 1-3. Distance not known. David king in Hebron over seven years. 1053 to 1046 B. C., or from 1055 to 1048. He was "thirty years old when he began to reign." 2 Sam. 5. 4. [Hebron, a beautiful town, handsomely located; perhaps the most primitive-looking of all the towns in Palestine.]

27. From Hebron to Jerusalem. 2 Sam. 5. 6-10. 1046 (or 1048) B. C. (D. 37 years old.) Distance, eighteen miles.

28. From Jerusalem against the Philistines, twice. 2 Sam. 5. 17-22. Smote them from Geba (v. 25) [probably Jeba, six miles north of Jerusalem] to Gazer or Gezer. ["It must have been beyond the lower Bethhoron toward the sea."—*Ayre.*] From Jerusalem to lower Bethhoron, twelve miles.

29. From Jerusalem to Kirjath-jearim, to bring home the ark of God. 2 Sam. 6. 1-19; 1 Chron. 13. 1-6. [Kirj.-j. same as Baale of Judah, now Kupert el-Enab, nine miles from Jerusalem.] 1043 B. C.

(D. 42 years old.) Hence the ark was brought home to Jerusalem. 2 Sam. 6. 11-16.

30. From Jerusalem against the Philistines. 2 Sam. 8. 1. Methegammah, probably refers to Gath. (Compare 1 Chron. 18. 1.) From J. to G., 22 miles; return, 22=44 miles.

31. From Jerusalem against Moab. 2 Sam. 8. 2. Possibly as far as Kerak. (See ITIN., 13.) From Jerusalem, 50 miles, and return, 50=100 miles.

32. From Jerusalem against Zobah. 2 Sam. 8. 3-9. "River Euphrates." In a north-easterly direction, 320 miles from Jerusalem. Damascus, 136 miles. Zobah, probably between Euphrates and Damascus.

33. From Jerusalem to Edom. 2 Sam. 8. 13, 14. South of Dead Sea, near Hor, which is 100 miles from Jerusalem.

After this Mephibosheth, the son of Jonathan, was brought from Lodebar, [on east of Jordan, and not now known,] and favored by the king. 2 Sam. 9. 1040 B. C. (D. 45 years old.)

34. From Jerusalem to Helam, against the Syrians. 2 Sam. 10. 17. [Somewhere between the Jordan and the Euphrates.] Just after this expedition, because of David's sin toward Uriah and Bathsheba, Nathan reproved David with the parable about the "ewe lamb," and made the direct application, "Thou art the man!" 2 Sam. 12. 1-14. 1034 B. C. (D. 51 years old.)

35. From Jerusalem to Rabbah of Ammon. 2 Sam. 12. 28-29. [On the east side of Jordan.] Absalom after this had trouble with his brother and with the king. Absalom fled, 1033 B. C. Afterward returned. Organized a rebellion. 2 Sam. 15. 1-12. David left Jerusalem and became the exile king. 2 Sam. 15. 13-30. 1023 B. C. (D. 62 years old.)

36. From Jerusalem to Mahanaim and return. 2 Sam. 17. 24. "Over the brook Kidron," 2 Sam.

15. 23; "toward the way of the wilderness;" "Mount Olivet;" v. 30; "top of the mount," v. 32; "a little past the top of the hill," 2 Sam. 16. 1; Bahurim, (v. 5.) [just beyond Olivet, on the way down toward the Jordan;] "over the water," 2 Sam. 17. 21; "Jordan," v. 22; Mahanaim, v. 24. [M. is probably same as Mahnah, near the banks of the Jabbok, about seventy miles north-east of Jerusalem. Jacob here met the angels. Gen. 32. 2. Peniel near this. Gen. 32. 24-32.] Battle in the wood of Ephraim, where Absalom was slain. [Where this wood was, except that it was in Gilead, we cannot now tell.] The sad news of Absalom's death was brought to [Lesson XII] the bereaved father, who sat at the gate of Mahanaim awaiting tidings. 2 Sam. 18. 1-33. David returned to the Jordan, 2 Sam. 19. 15-17, 39, 41; to Gilgal, v. 40. [six miles from Jordan, on west side, now Ribah;] Jerusalem, 2 Sam. 20. 2, 3. From Mahanaim to Gilgal, 55 miles. Gilgal to Jerusalem, 12 miles. A famine in Judah and Israel. 2 Sam. 21.

37. From Jerusalem to Jabesh-Gilead, for the bodies of Saul and Jonathan. 2 Sam. 21. 12-14. [Jabesh-Gilead, probably Ed-Deir, fifty or sixty miles north-east of Jerusalem, and eight or ten east of the Jordan.] He buried them in Zelah, [somewhere in Benjamin.]

38. From Jerusalem against the Philistines. 2 Sam. 21. 15-21. His last battle. After this, David numbered Israel and was punished. 2 Sam. 24. 1-17. The pestilence was arrested by sacrifices on the threshing-floor of Araunah, which David bought, and where Solomon afterward erected his temple. In his old age David called Solomon to his side, and gave him his last words of counsel and encouragement.

David died 1013 (or 1015) B. C., aged 70 years.

THE LORD IS MY ROCK, AND MY FORTRESS.
AND MY DELIVERER. 2 Sam. 22. 2.

B. C. 1061.]

LESSON XI.

[Dec. 16-

DAVID SPARING HIS ENEMY.—1 Sam. 24. 1-17.

GOLDEN TEXT.—But I say unto you, Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you and persecute you.—

MATT. 5. 44.

TIME.—B. C. 1061.

PLACE.—Engedi, on the western shore of the Dead Sea.

For the CONNECTING LINKS and the location of the places where David found refuge from Saul, see ITINERARY OF DAVID at the close of the last lesson.

INTRODUCTION.—About a year has passed since the events of the last lesson. David, with a few friends, fled to Nob, and thence to the court of Achish, king of Gath. Not safe there, he returned to Judah, and made the caves of its mountains his hiding-places. His family, in peril at home, came to him at Adullam, and a band of four hundred men, outlaws like himself, (chap. 22. 2,) gathered about him as their leader. 1 Chron. 11. 10-47. We find him in Moab, where he leaves his parents; in Judah again, at Hareth, Keilah, Ziph, and at Maon, where Saul's army surrounds him, putting him in great peril. The fifty-fourth psalm is his prayer for deliverance; the answer to it came in a message to Saul of a fresh Philistine invasion, which demanded his presence. Having ended this war, he turned his atten-

tion again to David.—*D. A. Whedon.* David, in his wanderings, amidst his wild, reckless comrades, is essentially the same man as David in the sheepfolds, or David fighting the Philistine. He had not chosen his own circumstances, he had been thrown into them. He did not rebel against Saul. He did not deny his authority or plot against his life even when he had cast him off. He had no home, and he was compelled to seek one where he could. I do not know where a better home could have been provided for him than among those men in distress, in debt, in discontent. If it behooved a ruler to know the heart of his subjects, their sorrows, their wrongs, their crimes, to know them and to sympathize with them, this was surely as precious a part of his schooling as the solitude of his boyhood, or as any intercourse he had with easy men who had never faced the misery of the world, and had never had a motive to quarrel with its laws. He was now among the lowest of those whom he would afterward have to govern, not hearing at a distance of their doings and sufferings, but partaking in them lovingly; realizing the influences which were disposing them to evil. And here he was acquiring more real reverence for law and order, more understanding of their nature, than those can ever arrive at who have never known the need of them from the want of them. He was bringing his wild followers under a loving discipline and government which they had never experienced; he was teaching them to confess a law which no tyrant had created, no anarchy could set aside. He instructed them by his example to bow before female grace and gentleness, to reverence the person of an enemy, to treat a king as the Lord's anointed.—*F. D. Maurice.*

1 And it came to pass, ¹ when Saul was returned from ^a following the Philistines, that it was told him, saying, Behold, David *is* in the wilderness of Engedi.

¹ Chap. 23. 28.—*a* After.

1. Saul . . . from following the Philistines—This was another of those bitter contests with that enemy against whom Saul was obliged to carry on war all his days, (chap. 14. 52;) but how long this war with the Philistines lasted, and of its relative importance, we are not informed.—*D. Steele.* David is in the wilderness—The wild region on the western shore of the Dead Sea. This wilderness is every-where of limestone formation, with a large mixture of chalk and flint. The surface is broken into conical hills and ridges, from two hundred to four hundred feet in height, and gradually sloping toward the Dead Sea. Some stunted shrubs are found in the highest part of this wilderness; further down occasionally a little grass is seen, and then, to a great extent, the aspect of the region is one of utter sterility and desolation. Here the *beden*, or mountain goat, still starts up on the approach of the traveler, and bounds along the face of the rock before him. On all sides the country is full of caverns, which might well serve as lurking-places for David and his men, as they do for outlaws at the present day.—*J. Kitto.* Engedi—(the fountain of the kid)



anciently called Hazézon-Tamar, (Gen. 14. 7; 2 Chron. 20. 2,) from the palm-trees which used to grow there, still preserves the name of Ain-Djedy. The water of the fountain "is rather warm, but

limpid, and delicious to the taste." At three minutes' ride from the fountain, "ruins" are

2 Then Saul took three thousand chosen men out of all Is'ra-el, ² and went to seek Da'vid and his men upon the rocks of the wild goats.

² Psa. 38. 12.

plentifully scattered around, but all apparently of inferior buildings. There are also vestiges of inclosing walls, and massive abutments formed of huge stones." Ain-Djedy is situated about two hundred yards from the Dead Sea, about the center of its western shore. The approach to it is through most dangerous and precipitous passes.—*Speaker's Commentary.*

2. Saul took three thousand—The standing army of the king, generally employed in service against the Philistines. David and his men—They were not villains and freebooters, as some have thought them, but victims of misrule and misfortune, who could preserve liberty and life only by flight and seclusion, as David had saved his. Among them were Gad, the prophet and successor of Samuel, and Abiathar, the priest, with the high-priest's ephod. Some of them were splendid heroes, and became eminent in the kingdom. See 2 Sam. 23. 8-39; 1 Chron. 11. 10-47. They made no war except on the enemies of Israel. Against Saul they stood only on the defensive, and they were always the protectors of the people in their vicinity.—*D. A. Whedon.* The rocks of the wild goats—"Among rocks of the wild goats," that is, among the high rocks and precipices, in which these animals delight.—*J. Kitto.*

As we now came in view of the ravine of the Wady Ghur a mountain goat started up and bounded along the face of the rocks on the opposite side. Indeed, we were now in the wilderness of Engedi, where David and his men lived among "the rocks of the wild goats," and where

3 And he came to the sheepcotes by the way, where *was* a cave; and Saul went in to ³ cover his feet: and ⁴ Da'vid and his men remained in the sides of the cave.

4 And ⁵the men of Da'vid said unto

² Judges 3. 34.—⁴ Psa. 57, title.

the former cut off the skirts of Saul's robe in a cave. The whole scene is drawn to life. On all sides the country is full of caverns, which might then serve as lurking-places for David and his men, as they do for outlaws at the present day.—*W. Robinson.*

3. The sheepcotes . . . where was a cave—I have seen hundreds of them around the mouth of caverns, and, indeed, there is scarcely a cave in the land, whose location will admit of being thus occupied, but has such "a cote" in front of it, generally made by piling up loose stones into a circular wall, which is covered with thorns as a further protection against robbers and wild beasts. During cold storms, in the night, the flocks retreat into the cave, but at other times they remain in this inclosed cote. The cavern may have been full of them when the king entered; nor would his presence have disturbed them—as I have found on many occasions—while their constant tramping about the sleeping Saul would have rendered the approach of David wholly unnoticed.—*W. M. Thomson.* To cover his feet—Not to lie down for sleep, for that idea could have been expressed more simply, but a euphemism for performing the necessities of nature, which was done in a sitting posture, the person covering himself with the folds of his garment. Compare Judges 3. 34.—*D. Steele.* It is likely that, when he had performed this *act of necessity*, he lay down to repose himself, and it was while he was asleep that David cut off the skirt of his robe.—*A. Clarke.* David and his men . . . in the sides—These caverns are as dark as midnight, and the keenest eye cannot see five paces *inward*; but one who has been long within, and is looking *outward* toward the entrance, can observe with perfect distinctness all that takes place in that direction; David, therefore, could watch Saul as he came in, and notice the exact place where he "covered his feet," while he could see nothing but impenetrable darkness.—*W. M. Thomson.* Saul now lay at his mercy, and it was easy to imagine how little mercy he should find with Saul, and therefore what little reason he had to show mercy to him.—*Matthew Henry.*

him, Behold the day of which the Lord said unto thee, Behold, I will deliver thine enemy into thine hand, that thou mayest do to him as it shall seem good unto thee. Then Da'vid arose, and cut off the skirt of ^b Saul's robe privily.

⁵ Chap. 26. 8.—⁶ The robe which was Saul's.

4, 5. The day of which the Lord said—This was the version by David's men of such Divine predictions as 1 Sam. 15. 28; 16. 1, 12. Jonathan's words (chaps. 20. 15; 23. 17) show clearly that these predictions were known, and the version of them here given was a very natural one in the mouth of David's men.—*Speaker's Commentary.* Mayest do . . . as it shall seem good—We read of no such promise, nor should we have known of it, had it not been thus incidentally mentioned. It did not indicate to David what he should do when this op-



Outer Garments.

portunity was placed in his hands. It gave him the power of doing whatever his heart prompted, but *what* he did, would show what manner of man he was. It was an occasion afforded him of vindicating the Lord's choice of him, by showing to all Israel his faith, his patience, his nobleness, by once more bringing forth the true greatness of his character, and proving his exemption from all vindictive feelings, and all low ambitions. So he viewed it. The Lord had delivered his enemy into his hands, not that he might destroy him, but that he might forgive him.—*J. Kitto.* The skirt of Saul's robe—A corner or flap of his outer garment. This garment Saul had probably laid off when

5 And it came to pass afterward, that Da'vid's ^eheart smote him, because he had cut off Saul's skirt.

6 And he said unto his men, The ⁷LORD forbid that I should do this thing unto my master, the LORD's anointed, to stretch forth mine hand against him, seeing he *is* the anointed of the LORD.

7 So Da'vid ^estayed his servants

62 Sam. 24. 10.—7 Chap. 26. 11.

he entered the cave, and so David was able the more easily to cut a piece from it unobserved by the king. — *D. Steele*. David's heart smote him—Here heart is used for conscience, as often in Hebrew. See Prov. 4. 23; Eccl. 7. 22.—*C. Wordsworth*. Because he had cut off Saul's skirt—No sooner, however, did Saul arise and leave the cavern, and his men began to laugh at the ridiculous figure the sovereign presented in his skirtless robe, than David's heart smote him for the indignity he had been instrumental in inflicting on the royal person.—*J. Kitto*. He thought the action inconsistent with the respect which he owed to the king.—*Speaker's Commentary*.

6. The Lord forbid that I should do—This rightness of feeling, so frequent in the history of David, this spontaneous, undeliberating truthfulness of expression and action, only possible to the man whose heart is essentially right, falls refreshingly upon the sense, like the gush of waters to one who plods thirstily along the dry and dusty ways of life.—*J. Kitto*. The anointed of the Lord—And, therefore, a sacred person, to be treated with reverence; notwithstanding his personal unworthiness. David showed more heroism in conquering his own anger, ambition, and revenge, and in sparing Saul, than in conquering Goliath, the champion of the Philistines.—*C. Wordsworth*.

7. David stayed his servants—The world notes both the eagerness and violence of David's men in prosecuting their desire, and David's resoluteness in opposing them, as it were, by force, wherein he shows great piety, and generosity and loyalty to Saul.—*M. Pool*. David's troops consisted of malecontents, all that were in distress, in bitterness of soul, were gathered to him. Many, if never so well ordered, are hard to command; a few, if disorderly, more hard; many and disorderly must needs be so much the hardest of all, that David never achieved any victory like unto this wherein he first overcame himself, then his soldiers.—*Bishop Hall*.

with these words, and suffered them not to rise against Saul. But Saul rose up out of the cave, and went on his way.

8 Da'vid also arose afterward, and went out of the cave, and cried after Saul, saying, My lord the king. And when Saul looked behind him, Da'vid stooped with his face to the earth, and bowed himself.

c Cut off; Psa. 7. 4; Matt. 5. 44; Rom. 12. 17.

Suffered them not to rise—To the comparatively coarse minds of his followers, the relinquishment of so signal an advantage must have seemed, and did seem, like madness, and it needed all the authority he had established over their rough natures to compel their submission to his view of the case. It is not the less true, that had David suffered the king to be slain under these circumstances, the result could not but have been most discouraging to himself. Would the people willingly have consigned the scepter to the hands stained with the blood of Saul? Would not Jonathan himself have been stung into open war against the slayer of his father, and instead of submitting to the exaltation of his friend, would he not rather, with the approval and sympathy of all Israel, have stood up for his own rights? Besides, by this act, David would set an example of disregard for the character and condition of the "Lord's anointed," which might be turned most dangerously against himself when exalted to the throne.—*J. Kitto*.

8. David . . . cried after Saul—David doubtless trusted in his own skill in climbing the crags of the wild goats to elude any pursuit should Saul's men pursue him, but hoped that such a signal proof of his integrity as he was able to give would disarm Saul's resentment.—*Speaker's Commentary*. When Saul looked—Well did the king know that voice. A thunder-clap could not have struck him more. He looked up, and David bowed himself very low in becoming obedience to his king. He spoke. In a few rapid and strong words, he told what had happened, he described the urgency he had resisted, he held up the skirt in proof how completely had been in his hand the life he spared.—*J. Kitto*. Compare the title of Psa. 7, which refers to the present situation; there were calumniating go-betweens, one of whom was the otherwise unknown Benjamite Cush, who stood, therefore, in the same category with the Ziphites and Doeg. Saul hearkened to these

9 And Da'vid said to Saul, Wherefore^a hearest thou men's words, saying, Behold, Da'vid seeketh thy hurt.

10 Behold, this day thine eyes have seen how that the LORD had delivered thee to-day into mine hand in the cave: and some bade me kill thee; but mine eye spared thee; and I said, I will not put mine hand against my lord; for he is the LORD's anointed.

11 Moreover, my father, see, yea, see the skirt of thy robe in my hand: for in that I cut off the skirt of thy robe, and killed thee not, know thou and see that

there is neither^b evil nor transgression in mine hand, and I have not sinned against thee; yet thou¹⁰ huntest my soul to take it.

12 The¹¹ LORD judge between me and thee, and the LORD avenge me of thee: but mine hand shall not be upon thee.

13 As saith the proverb of the ancients, Wickedness proceedeth from the wicked: but mine hand shall not be upon thee.

14 After whom is the¹² king of Israel come out? after whom dost thou pursue? ¹³after a dead dog, after ¹⁴a flea?

^a Psalm 141. 6; Proverbs 16. 28; 17. 9.—^b Psalm 7. 3; 35. 7.—
10. chap. 26. 20.

¹¹ Gen. 16. 5; Judg. 11. 27; Job 5. 8.—¹² Job 32. 9; Prov. 5. 23.
—¹³ Chap. 17. 43; 2 Sam. 9. 8.—¹⁴ Chap. 26. 20.

slanders and believed them, because his heart was full of mistrust and hate against David.—*C. F. Erdmann.*

9. Wherefore hearest thou men's words—David was quite aware that there were flatterers at Saul's court who were continually inflaming his mind by their false accusations against David. This explains the language of many of the Psalms, as, for example, 10, 11, 12, 35, and many more.—*Speaker's Commentary.* Some bade me kill thee—It is very doubtful whether the Hebrew can be so rendered. The natural construction of the sentence would be "The Lord had delivered thee into my hand, and bade me kill thee." But this is hardly a likely expression for David to have used. A mere change in the punctuation would give the sense expressed by the Vulgate, "I thought to kill thee," etc.—*Speaker's Commentary.* He also expressly affirms that the temptation to kill him was presented to him, "one said," (as in chap. 23, 22,) but at the same time declares that he spared him.—*C. F. Erdmann.* Mine eyes spared thee—"I looked upon thee with pity and mercy" is the meaning.

11. My father—The respectful address of a junior and an inferior. See 2 Kings 5. 13, and comp. verse 16; chap. 25. 8; Ruth 2. 8; 3. 10.—*Speaker's Commentary.* Saul was David's father-in-law, and by this address the son of Jesse shows the king a childlike respect and reverence. It was a word of love that touched the heart of Saul, and brought the response *my son.*—*D. Steele.* See the skirt—Which David held up as a proof of his declaration that Saul's life had been in his hand. I have not sinned against thee—His action at that time was a proof of his innocence toward Saul at all times. Thou huntest my soul—Rather "my life." He

shows his own mercy and Saul's hate in strong contrast.

12, 13. The Lord judge—David declares that he will not take the judgment of his relations with Saul upon himself, but will leave it to the Lord to decide who was in the right and who in the wrong. The Lord avenge me—"If punishment is to be given, let it be awarded by the Lord." This is not a prayer for vengeance, but expresses David's wish to leave the result with God. The proverb of the ancients—The whole verse is the proverb quoted, as is evident from the repetition of the words, *my hand*, etc., the use of which in verse 12 recalled the proverb to his mind.—*Speaker's Commentary.* Wickedness proceedeth from the wicked—And therefore were I the wicked man that some represent me, (verse 9,) I would have wrought wickedness against the king when it lay in my power. But the fact that I leave Jehovah to avenge me, and refuse to lift my hand against the king, shows that wickedness proceedeth not from me. These words of David also contain a tacit implication that wickedness was proceeding from Saul.—*D. Steele.*

14, 15. After whom does the king of Israel come out—This is another argument to deter Saul from his course. Was it consistent with the dignity of the king of Israel to lead armies in pursuit of a weak and helpless individual like David? He hoped, too, to cool down Saul's envy by such humble expressions concerning himself.—*Speaker's Commentary.* A dead dog . . . a flea—A term of contempt and a term of insignificance. By these terms David represents himself as one so contemptible and insignificant that it was beneath the dignity of Israel's royal monarch to pursue him.—*D. Steele.* David thinks Saul had no more reason to fear

15 The LORD therefore be judge, and judge between me and thee, and ¹⁶ see, and ¹⁶ plead my cause, and ^a deliver me out of thine hand.

16 And it came to pass, when Da'vid had made an end of speaking these words unto Saul, that Saul

^{15, 2} Chron. 24. 22.—¹⁶ Psa. 35. 1; 43. 1; 119. 154; Micah 7. 9.

him than to fear a flea-bite.—*M. Henry.* The Lord... judge—So it is said of the son of David, that he committed himself to him that judgeth righteously, (1 Pet. 2. 23.)—*Speaker's Commentary.* Deliver me—He makes his solemn appeal from an unjust and unmerciful ruler to the higher court of Israel's just God. Out of thine hand—This address of David has so much natural eloquence, so much glow, and such a tone of conviction, that no one who has any sense for the simple beauties of the Bible can read it without being moved. The whole situation, too, is noble: David, standing on the rocky height in the desert, holding on high the trophy of his magnanimity, looking at and addressing the melancholy Saul, whom he loved as a father, honored as king, revered as the Lord's anointed, who yet without ground hated him and persecuted him with relentless and deadly zeal—using the opportunity with rapid words, which expressed his deepest feelings, to touch the heart of his enemy—he himself full of humility oppressed by indescribable suffering and weighed down by the feeling of powerlessness, yet inspired by the consciousness of a noble deed.—*Philippson.*

16. Saul said, . . . my son David—Saul, tossed powerless hither and thither by fierce passions, without self-control and without harmony of soul-life, is here laid hold of in a hidden corner of his heart, where he was still accessible to the power of truth, and involuntarily yields to this noble arousing of his soul, though it is not destined to be permanent. — *C. F. Erdmann.* Lifted up his voice, and wept—Many mourn for their sins, that do not truly repent of them; weep bitterly for them, and yet continue in love and league with them.—*M. Henry.*

17. Thou art more righteous than I—This proves that his conscience was touched by David's words, which had so sharply contrasted innocence and baseless persecution, righteousness and unrighteousness. Saul must do honor to the truth; the overwhelming force of David's words, founded in truth, forces this confession from him; though a thorough and permanent

said, ¹⁷ Is this thy voice, my son Da'vid? And Saul lifted up his voice, and wept.

17 And he said to Da'vid, Thou art ¹⁸ more righteous than I: for thou ¹⁹ hast rewarded me good, whereas I have rewarded thee evil.

d Judge.—¹⁷ Chap. 26. 17.—¹⁸ Gen. 38. 26.—¹⁹ Matt. 5. 44.

change for the better is not thereby effected in his heart.—*C. F. Erdmann.* The confession is unwillingly extorted, the mind being nothing bettered.—*Grotius.* I have rewarded thee evil—Nor was this all. In the presence of the man whom he recognized as worthier than himself, his proud heart yielded for the moment to acknowledge him as destined to inherit his crown, and he humbled himself to ask of him—to make him swear, that in the coming time he would spare his family, and not doom it to extermination. This request painfully reminds us of the antiquity of the eastern custom, which has subsisted to our own time, for a new ruler to destroy all those of the previous family whose claims might by any possible circumstances be brought into rivalry with his own.—*J. Kitto.*

Authorities to be Consulted.

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Practical Root Thoughts.

[THE SPIRIT OF DAVID.]

1. David showed in the cave the spirit of mercy and forbearance, in not taking revenge for his wrongs. Ver. 3, 4.

2. David showed the spirit of insight into God's word, by his fulfillment of the prophecy, and doing to his enemy as it seemed good. Ver. 4.

3. David showed the spirit of loyalty, by his treatment of the sovereign, in respect for his person. Ver. 5, 10.

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| <p>4. David showed the spirit of authority and leadership, by his control over the passions of his followers. Ver. 6, 7.</p> <p>5. David showed the spirit of faith, leaving</p> | <p>himself and his cause in the hands of the Lord. Ver. 11, 12.</p> <p>6. David showed the spirit of humility, in his modest estimate of himself. Ver. 14.</p> |
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DEATH OF SAUL AND JONATHAN.—1 Sam. 31. 1-13.

GOLDEN TEXT.—The wicked is driven away in his wickedness: but the righteous hath hope in his death.—PROV. 14. 32.

TIME.—B. C. 1056.

PLACE.—Mount Gilboa, on the border of the plain of Esdraelon.

CONNECTING LINKS.—(See Itinerary of David, p. 300, Nos. 19-25.) (1) David and Abigail. 1 Sam. 25. 1-41. (2) David sparing Saul's life a second time. 1 Sam. 26. 1-25. (3) David at Ziklag. 1 Sam. 27. 1-12. (4) Saul and the witch of Endor. 1 Sam. 28. 1-25. (5) David sent away by the Philistines. 1 Sam. 29. 1-11. (6) Ziklag spoiled and the plunder recaptured. 1 Sam. 30. 1-31.

INTRODUCTION.—The Philistines, so long kept at bay, once more broke into the Israelite territory. From the five cities they advanced far into the land. They had been driven from the hills of Judah. They now summoned all their strength for a last struggle in the plain of Esdraelon, where their chariots and horses could move freely. On the central branch of the plain, on the southern slope of the range called the Hill of Moreh, by the town of Shunem, they pitched their camp. On the opposite side, on the rise of Mount Gilboa, was the Israelite army, keeping as usual to the heights which were their security. It was as nearly as possible where Gideon's camp had been pitched against the Midianites, hard by the spring which, from the "fear and trembling" of Gideon's companions, had been called the spring of Harod, or "trembling." We know not what may have been the feeling of the army at this second like conjuncture. But there was no Gideon to lead them. Saul, (we are told, with a direct allusion to the incident which had given its name to the place,) "when he saw the camp of the Philistines, was afraid, and his heart trembled exceedingly." "The Spirit of the Lord, which had roused him in his former years, had now departed from him." There was now no harp of the shepherd psalmist to drive away the evil spirit, and "when he inquired of the Lord, the Lord answered him not;" no vision was vouchsafed to him in trance or dream as before, when he lay under prophetic influence, all night at Ramah; no intimation of the Divine will by the Urim and Thummim of the high-priest's breastplate, for the house of Ithamar had been exterminated by the sword of Doeg, and its sole survivor, Abiathar, was following the fortunes of his fugitive rival; no consoling voice of the prophets of God, for Samuel, his ancient counselor, had long since parted from him, and had descended in mourning to his grave. He was left alone to himself, and now the last spark of life, the religious zeal which he had followed even to excess, this also vanished, or rather, as must always be the case when it has thus swerved from the moral principle which alone can guide it, was turned into a wild and desperate superstition.—*Dean Stanley.*

The witch of Endor.—The woman of Endor was a superior clairvoyant. All the parts of the narrative are so happily explained on this hypothesis as to evidence its probable correctness and worth. Careful and continued investigations in clairvoyance have within the last century shed much light on the mysteries of magic. We know that men have charmed serpents, and serpents have charmed men. Man, too, can charm man, and it has been shown beyond successful contradiction that, in accordance with certain occult laws of our being, one person can so fascinate another and place himself in such sympathetic rapport with his soul, as to become sensible of what he feels or imagines. This power, however, exists in different persons in different degrees. Some persons it seems impossible to mesmerize at all, while others are highly susceptible to mesmeric operations, and are easily thrown into a clairvoyant state. Others, again, have the unusual power of spontaneously inducing upon themselves the clairvoyant state, and by coming into contact or association with the soul of another, the superior clairvoyant becomes cognizant of the feelings and emotions of that soul. By the power of an inner vision he appears to see in that soul the thoughts and impressions that are deeply fixed in the imagination or the memory. We assume, then, that the witch of Endor was a clairvoyant who could spontaneously place herself in mesmeric intercourse with the souls of those who came to inquire of her, and that with this power she united the practice of lying and deceit as she found occasion to serve her own dark purposes.—*D. Steele.*

The character of Saul.—We are impressed from the beginning to the end of his career with the conviction, which deepens all the way along, that he was unequal to his times. He was the center of events and persons greater than himself, and was sadly deficient in those mental and religious qualities

which mark the highest style of man. He possessed, indeed, some touching and tender traits of character. In his earlier years he was meek and little in his own eyes, (chap. 15. 17,) though in the eyes of all who knew him he was a choice and noble youth. Chap. 9. 2. His emotional soul quickly caught the ecstasy of the prophetic schools, and he prophesied among them, and even in the later days of his insane persecution of David there would come moments of deep humiliation and contrition of soul, when he would melt into tearful tenderness. Chaps. 24. 16; 26. 21. But he was unequal to the weight of empire. Elevation to power spoiled and finally ruined him, for there was in him a sad mental and religious incapacity for meeting the exigencies of that most trying period of Israelitish history.—*D. Steele.*

1 Now ¹the Phi-lis'tines fought against Is'ra-el: and the men of Is'ra-el fled from before the Phi-lis'tines, and fell down ²slain in mount ³Gil-bo'a.

¹ 1 Chron. 10. 1.—² Or, wounded.

1. The Philistines—See Third Quarter, Lesson X, ver. 21, note on the Philistines. Fought against Israel—It was the very spot on which Gideon won his great victory over the Midianites a hundred and eighty-three years before. See Judges 7. 1, and notes on Lesson IX, Third Quarter.—The plain on its eastern border

2 And the Phi-lis'tines followed hard upon Saul and upon his sons; and the Phi-lis'tines slew ³Jon'a-than, and A-bin'-a-dab, and Mel-chi-shu'a, Saul's sons.

³ Chap. 28. 4.—³ 1 Chron. 8. 33.

Israelitish troops that Saul had received a communication from Samuel, and that their defeat and their leader's death had been foretold. This would unnerve their bravest heroes, and spread terror among all. And after his return from that midnight conference with the witch of Endor, Saul himself could have had no spirit to fight.—*D. Steele.* First Israel flies, and falls down wounded in Mount Gilboa; they had their part in Saul's sin; they were actors in David's persecution; justly, therefore, do they suffer with him whom they had seconded in offense.—*Bishop Hall.* Gilbo'a, or Gil'-boa (bubbling fountain)—A mountain east of the plain of Jezreel, about ten miles long, running east-south-east and west-north-west; the northern slope is steep, the southern was probably once covered with forests, though it is now inhabited and cultivated. The mountain is now called *Jebel Fakia*; it is one thousand seven hundred and seventeen feet above the level of the sea.—*Schaff.*

2. The Philistines followed hard—In the battle of Jezreel the victorious Philistines pressed forward to the south-east from the plain in which they had been at first stationed, up to Mount Gilboa. Here Saul and his faithful followers made a desperate resistance, but so many of their bravest fell, that the Philistines not only plundered the camp of Israel in the full tide of victory, but even gained possession of the whole territory as far as the Jordan, and so reached the utmost limit of their desires. Hard pressed by the Philistines, there fell in the slaughter of that same battle, not only Saul's three sons, Jonathan, Abinadab, and Melchishua, but also Saul himself.—*H. Ewald.* Upon Saul and . . . his sons—When Saul and his sons saw the people flying they prob-



Saul's Last Battle.

branches into three, the central one being the entrance of the valley of Jezreel, here about two and a half miles wide. At Shunem, on the north side, at the base of Little Hermon, lay the Philistines, on the old Midianite camping-ground, and Saul's camp stood where Gideon's had been, on the lower slope of Gilboa, at whose foot was the fountain of Jezreel, forty feet in diameter.—*D. A. Whedon.* The men of Israel fled—It was probably whispered among the

3 And ^athe battle went sore against Saul, and the ^barchers ^chit him; and he was sore wounded of the archers.

4 Then ^dsaid Saul unto his armour-bearer, Draw thy sword, and thrust me

^a 2 Sam. 1. 6.—^b Shooters, men with bows.—^c Found him.—^d Judg.

ably placed themselves in the thickest of the battle, and sought, as by the last efforts of despair, to turn the tide of the Philistines' victory. Thus they exposed themselves to death.



—*D. Steele.* Slew Jonathan — Jonathan had not gone

with his father to Endor, and we hear nothing of his being with him when he was persecuting David; but he now comes to him when he is in distress, and assists him against the Philistines. And now he falls in battle, fighting for his father and for his country against the enemies of Israel, and he is received to a better kingdom than that which he leaves to David, and his death is an entrance into a temporal kingdom to his friend David, and into an eternal one to himself.

C. Wordsworth. The sword of the Philistines fetcheth Jonathan through it with his fellows; no sooner is his foot over that threshold than God conducteth him to glory. — *Bishop Hall.* Abinadab and Melchi-shua — Nothing is known concerning these sons of Saul.

3, 4. Archers—Shooters; explained further by the phrase *men with the bow*; that is, men who shot arrows with the bow. — *D. Steele.* Hit him — This is incorrectly translated, and should be *They discovered him.* His great height and his crown made him conspicuous. The sharpshooters singled him out, aimed their arrows at him, and wounded him, but not mortally. — *S. S. Journal.* This verse is rendered better thus: *Then the battle was heavy against Saul, and the archers, men with the bow, discovered him, and he became greatly terrified because of the archers.* After his sons had fallen, Saul was in worse straits than ever, for now the brunt of the battle came on him. — *D. Steele.* He was sore wounded. — Rather, *alarmed, terrified.* The word nowhere means to be wounded, as our version has it here. It is, indeed, probable that some of their arrows struck him, and this caused his alarm. He saw that he was the mark of the Philistine sharpshooters, and he therefore *washed* and quaked with terror at the thought of falling by

through therewith; lest ^ethese uncircumcised come and thrust me through, and ^dabuse me. But his armor-bearer would not; for he was sore afraid. Therefore Saul took a sword, and ^ffell upon it.

9. 54.—^g Chap. 14. 6; 17. 26.—^d Or, mock me.—^f 2 Sam. 1. 10.

such hands. — *D. Steele.* Then said Saul — This account of Saul's death is every way consistent with itself and with Saul's character, and is to be regarded as the true and authentic record of the sacred historian himself. The story of the Amalekite who stole the king's crown and bracelet, and brought them to David, (2 Sam. 1. 4-10,) is to be treated as a fabrication, feigned with the hope of finding favor with the successor of Saul. — *D. Steele.* Unto his armor-bearer — See chap. 16. 21. Had David continued in this office he would probably have perished in this battle. But God had put him in a place of safety, though it seemed once of great peril. — *Speaker's Commentary.* Thrust me through — He would rather die by the hands of his friend than of his foes. Lest these uncircumcised — It is remarkable that the epithet *uncircumcised*, used as a term of reproach, is confined almost exclusively to the Philistines. Compare Judg. 14. 8; 15. 18; 1 Sam. 17. 26, 36; 31. 4; 2 Sam. 1. 20; 1 Chron. 10. 4; and also 1 Sam. 13. 25, 27; 2 Sam. 3. 14. This is probably an indication of the long oppression of the Israelites by the Philistines, and their frequent wars. *Speaker's Commentary.* And abuse me — Lest they take me, and put me to some shameful and cruel death. — *M. Pool.* He [the armor-bearer] was sore afraid — He dared not stretch forth his hand against the Lord's anointed; the very thought of such an act filled him with fear. — *D. Steele.* Took a sword — "A sword" should be "the sword," that is, Saul took the armor-bearer's sword. — *Eugene Stock.* Fell upon it — The straitened and disgraceful position to which the Philistines had brought him, whence there was no escape with life, was the result of his persistent, stubborn disobedience to God, and of the inward judicial inflictions of self-hardening. As self-willed lord of his life, unbending, haughty controller of his fate over against God, he will put an end to his life; this is the end of the insoluble contradiction in which he had placed himself toward God; this is the act of completed despair, in which God's judgment is exhausted, and he himself must be its instrument. — *C. F. Erdmann.*

Jonathan, who received his death wound from the hand of the Philistines, and bravely yielded to

5 And when his armour-bearer saw that Saul was dead, he fell likewise upon his sword, and died with him.

6 So Saul ^sdied, and his three sons, and his armour-bearer, and all his men, that same day together.

7 And when the men of Is'ra-el that were on the other side of the valley, and

they that were on the other side Jor'dan, saw that the men of Is'ra-el fled, and that Saul and his sons were dead, they forsook the cities, and fled; and the Phi-lis'tines came and dwelt in them.

8 And it came to pass on the morrow, when the Phi-lis'tines came to strip the

8 Rom.

6. 23.

the fate of war, died in the bed of honor; but Saul died as a fool dieth, as a coward dieth, a proud fool, a sneaking coward; he died as a man that had neither the fear of God, nor hope in God; neither the reason of a man, nor the religion of an Israelite, nor the resolution of a soldier.—*M. Henry*. Even in Saul's dying speech there is something of that religious formalism which marked his character after his fall from God, and which is a striking sign of spiritual blindness; "Lest these *uncircumcised* come." He censures the Philistine as *uncircumcised*; he professes zeal for the letter of the law, just as if circumcision could profit without obedience, and as if he himself was not *uncircumcised*, both in heart and lips!—*C. Wordsworth*.

5. His armor-bearer . . . fell likewise—Saul and his armor-bearer died by the same sword. That his armor-bearer died by his own sword is out of all doubt; the text expressly tells us so; and that Saul perished by the same sword is sufficiently evident. *Draw thy sword*, says he to him, *and thrust me through*; which, when he refused, *Saul*, says the text, *took the sword, (the very sword,) and fell upon it*. What sword? Not his *own*, for then the text would have said so; but, in the plain natural grammatical construction, the *sword before mentioned* must be the sword now referred to, that is, his armor-bearer's. 1 Chron. 10. 4, 5. Now it is the established tradition of all the Jewish nation that this armor-bearer was *Doeg*, and I see no reason why it should be discredited; and if so, then Saul and his executioner both fell by that weapon with which they had before massacred the priests of God.—*Dr. Delaney*. **Died with him**—Touching and beautiful was this devotion of the faithful armor-bearer to his king. It not only evidences the deep attachment of a true and tender heart, but also shows that Saul was not without a strong personal magnetism, which drew others to him, and kept them firmly there. At his public election at Mizpeh there came to Saul a number of men whose hearts were touched by God, (chap. 10. 26,) and at no time during his reign did he want for attendants who were thus tenderly attached to his person and interests.—*D. Steele*.

6. All his men—Explained in 1 Chron. 10. 6, by "all his house," that is, all the members of his house that were with him in the battle. His son Ishbosheth was not there.—*C. Wordsworth*. This and similar expressions must not be taken too literally. We know that Abner, and Ishbosheth, and many more survived the day of Gilboa. The Chronicles, (1 Chron. 10. 6,) instead of *all his men*, has *all his house*.—*Speaker's Commentary*.

7. When the men of Israel—A distinction is here made between the "men of Israel" who were non-combatants and dwelt east of the field of battle, and the "men of Israel" who formed the army.—*C. F. Erdmann*. **On the other side of the valley**—The inhabitants on the opposite side of the great plain of Jezreel; that is, on the western side of the plain, opposite to the mountains of Gilboa.—*D. Steele*. **On the other side Jordan**—The word rendered *other side* here, is *eber*, and does not mean *other side*, but *over against*.—*C. Wordsworth*. The ordinary rendering "beyond Jordan," meaning the region east of Jordan, may be retained by supposing that the panic was so great as to extend to the other side of the river, and that the Philistines temporarily occupied the transjordanic cities. Similarly the people "beyond the plain" were panic-struck and fled.—*C. H. Toy*. **They forsook the cities**—Finding that the defeat left them without defenders, helpless in the hands of the enemy. **Philistines . . . dwelt in them**—This speedy occupation by the Philistines of the conquered and depopulated cities of Israel, shows their strong purpose to hold henceforth in close subjection the country whose people had been to them so irrepressible a foe. But Abner seems to have recovered these cities to the kingdom of Saul, (2 Sam. 2. 8,) and subsequently David utterly subdued the Philistines. 2 Sam. 8. 1.—*D. Steele*.

8. On the morrow—Night had probably put an end to the battle which Saul had continued with desperate courage to the last. The Philistines were not aware, till the next day, of the full extent of their victory.—*Speaker's Commentary*.

slain, that they found Saul and his three sons fallen in mount Gil-bo'a.

9 And they cut off his head, and stripped off his armor, and sent into the land of the Phi-lis'tines round about, to ⁹publish it in the house of their idols, and among the people.

10 And ¹⁰they put his armour in the house of ¹¹Ash'ta-roth; and they fas-

tened his body to the wall ¹²of Beth'-shan.

11 And when the inhabitants of Ja'besh - gil'e-ad heard ¹⁰of that which the Phi-lis'tines had done to Saul,

12 All ¹³the valiant men arose, and went all night, and took the body of Saul and the bodies of his sons

⁹ 2 Sam. 1. 20.—¹⁰ Chap. 21. 9.—¹¹ Judg. 2. 13.—¹² Josh. 17. 2 Sam.

11; Judg. 1. 27.—¹³ Or, concerning him.—¹² Chap. 11. 1-11; 2. 4-7.

Came to strip the slain—They did not pause in the heat of battle or in the first flush of victory to gather up their trophies.—*D. Steele.* **They found Saul**—The body of the king had already been plundered of its crown and the golden bracelet on its arm by the Amalekite, whose story (in which it is impossible for us to separate the truth from the falsehood) is told in 2 Sam. 1. 2-10.

9. **They cut off his head**—His sons seem to have received the same barbarous treatment. See verse 12. This revenge on the lifeless bodies of the slain shows, according to some writers, the low and miserable barbarity of the Philistines; but did not David treat the dead body of Goliath in the same way? (chap. 17. 54;) and what shall be said of Samuel's hewing Agag in pieces? Chap. 15. 33. We must not judge the usages of that age by our own.—*D. Steele.* **Stripped off his armor**—See illustrations of armor with Lesson VIII. **To publish it**—As a triumph which in some measure might compensate for the destruction wrought at the death of Samson. Lesson X, Third Quarter. **In the house of their idols**—As if to proclaim it in the hearing of their idols, and to their praise; or because the feasts attended by many thousands of people were held in and around the idol-temples.

10. **The house of Ashtaroth**—[See illustration "Head of Ashtaroth" with Lesson VIII, Third Quarter, and note on verse 13.] This was doubtless the famous temple of Venus in Askalon, mentioned by Herodotus (i, 105) as the most ancient of all her temples. Hence the special mention of Askalon, 2 Sam. 1. 20. The placing Saul's armor as a trophy in the temple of Ashtaroth was a counterpart to the placing of Goliath's sword in the tabernacle, chap. 21. 9; 17. 54.—*Speaker's Commentary.* **To the wall**—*The wall* of Beth-shan, to which the bodies were fastened, appears to have faced some main street of the city. 2 Sam. 21. 12.—*D. Steele.* **Beth-shan**—"House of rest; the halting-place

for caravans from Syria or Midian to Egypt, and the emporium for the commerce of these countries. It afterward was called, in the Greek, Scythopolis, and is identified with the modern Beisan, at the east end of the plain of Esdrael, five miles west of the Jordan. "The site of the ancient city, as of the modern village, was a splendid one, in this vast area of plain and mountain, in the midst of abundant waters and of exuberant fertility. It must have been a city of temples." (*Robinson.*)—*D. Steele.* **Jabesh-Gilead**—A city of Gilead, situated on a mountain east of the Jordan. Because its inhabitants would not join in the crusade against Benjamin, the whole male population was destroyed, and virgins to the number of four hundred were seized to be given in marriage to the remnant of the Benjamites. Judges 21. 8-14. However, the city survived and regained its importance. Being subsequently besieged by Nabash, the Ammonite, the Israelites under Saul rose to rescue it. 1 Sam. 11. 1-11. Saul's kindness was not forgotten by the people of Jabesh. Probably the site is at the present ruin *ed-Deir*, on the south side of the *Wady Yabes*, which enters the Jordan below Beth-shan, or *Scythopolis*.—*Whitney.*

12. **The valiant men**—Remembering the brave deed of Saul in rescuing their city, nearly forty years before. **Went all night**—Following the Jordan up the valley to Beth-shan. **Took the body**—Which, it would appear, was left unguarded. Or perhaps the attack was so sudden and unexpected that there was no time to defend the city. **Burnt them**—Such disposal of the bodies of the dead was not a custom among the Israelites, but has been accounted for in the present case on the supposition that these bodies were mutilated and already putrid, so that they could not receive honorable burial; and there was danger that the Philistines, finding the bodies stolen from the wall of Beth-shan, would hasten to recapture them, and do them some greater dishonor.—*D. Steele.*

from the wall of Beth'shan, and came to Ja'besh, and ¹⁴ burnt them there.

¹⁴ 2 Chron. 16. 14; Jer. 34. 5; Amos. 6. 10.

13. Took their bones—From which it appears that they were not burned to ashes.—*D. Steele.* **Buried them under a tree**—Rather, "*Under the tamarisk*," a well-known tree at Jabesh, which was standing when this narrative was written.—*Speaker's Commentary.* **They fasted seven days**—In imitation of the mourning for Jacob *seven days*. Gen. 1. 10. They would give full honor to Saul though he was fallen.—*Speaker's Commentary.* We must not understand this word of *fasting* strictly, as if they ate nothing for seven whole days, but in a more large and general sense, as it is used both in sacred and profane writers; that they did eat but little, and that seldom, and that but mean food, and drunk only water for that time.—*M. Pool.* For this deed the men of Jabesh received the thanks of David. 2 Sam. 2. 5-7.

The sun of the morning looked forth from his throne

And beamed on the face of the dead and the dying;

For the yell of the strife like the thunder had flown,

And red on Gilboa the carnage was lying.

And there lay the husband that lately was pressed

To the beautiful cheek that was tearless and ruddy;

Now the claws of the vulture were fixed in his breast,

And the beak of the vulture was busy and bloody.

And there lay the son of the widowed and sad,

Who yesterday went from her dwelling forever;

Now the wolf of the hills a sweet carnival had

On the delicate limbs that had ceased not to quiver.

O bloody Gilboa! a curse ever lie

Where the king and his people were slaughtered together!

May the dew and the rain leave thy herbage to die,
Thy flocks to decay, and thy forests to wither!

—William Knox.

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13 And they took their bones, ¹⁵ and buried *them* under a tree at Ja'besh, and fasted ¹⁶ seven days.

¹⁵ 2 Sam. 21. 12-14. — ¹⁶ Gen. 50. 10; Job 2. 13.

Authorities to be Consulted.

Smith's Old Testament History, chap. 20. Milman's History of the Jews, book vii. Kitto's Daily Bible Illustrations, 35th week. Stanley's Jewish Church, Lecture xxi. Kitto's History of the Bible, chap. xvi. Guthrie's Sunday Magazine, vol. i, p. 658. Ewald's History of Israel, vol. iii, pp. 103, 106. Maurice's Prophets and Kings, Sermon ii. Bishop Hall's Contemplations, book xiv, cont. 6. Stems and Twigs, ii, 99. Geikie's Hours with the Bible, vol. iii, chap. 5. Freeman's Bible Manners and Customs, Nos. 47, 304, 343, 367. Foster's Cyclopedia of Illustrations, *3469, *3973, *3974, 3975, *3976. [Figures marked with a star refer to poetical quotations.]

Practical Root Thoughts.

[LESSONS FROM SAUL'S END.]

1. We see that old foes, though put down for a time, are sure to rise again when men have forsaken God. Ver. 1:

2. We see that forsaking God is sure to end in defeat and failure. Vers. 1-6.

3. We see that apostasy from God involves the innocent as well as the guilty in the ruin which it brings. Vers. 2-6.

4. We see that character is not always rewarded in this life, for Jonathan falls with his father. Ver. 2.

5. We see that those who have forsaken God in life find no opportunity nor desire to turn to God in death, for Saul is defiant and rash to the last. Ver. 4.

6. We see the harm and trouble which a leader's errors and sins bring to the cause of God. When Saul fell the land was more thoroughly under its enemies than when he rose. Ver. 7.

7. We see that a generous, noble deed is not forgotten. Saul's deliverance of Jabesh brought its reward after his death. Vers. 11-13.





1862. *Comm. to* *1862.*

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